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# STUDIES

## in the Spirituality of Jesuits

**Personal Experience and the Spiritual Exercises  
The Example of Saint Ignatius**  
by  
**John W. Padberg, S.J.**



**Published by the American Assistancy Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality,  
especially for American Jesuits working out their *aggiornamento*  
in the spirit of Vatican Council II**



## THE AMERICAN ASSISTANCY SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

consists of a group of Jesuits from various provinces who are listed below. The members were appointed by the Fathers Provincial of the United States.

The Purpose of the Seminar is to study topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and to communicate the results to the members of the Assistancy. The hope is that this will lead to further discussion among all American Jesuits--in private, or in small groups, or in community meetings. All this is done in the spirit of Vatican Council II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original charismatic inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the changed circumstances of modern times. The members of the Seminar welcome reactions or comments in regard to the topics they publish.

To achieve these purposes, especially amid today's pluralistic cultures, the Seminar must focus its direct attention sharply, frankly, and specifically on the problems, interests, and opportunities of the Jesuits of the United States. However, many of these interests are common also to Jesuits of other regions, or to other priests, religious men or women, or lay men or women. Hence the studies of the Seminar, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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John W. Padberg, S.J.

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PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*  
THE EXAMPLE OF SAINT IGNATIUS

by

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Author's Preface

1. The Reason for This Study

If ever a book was the product of personal experience, the book of the *Spiritual Exercises*<sup>\*</sup> is such a work. For St. Ignatius' own experience was the source which the Exercises sprang from and to some extent recorded; and the Exercises, in turn, were closely related not only to his experience but also to his life and times. This issue of *Studies* will aim to illustrate this multiple relationship by means of examples.

Why do this? Will this relation of Ignatius' experience, reflection, and action to the Exercises make any difference to the spirituality of American Jesuits? or to the way in which they carry on their apostolates, especially their apostolates which are directly connected with the Exercises? After all, my current personal experience of God is in no instance a simple redoing of the experience of Ignatius. Neither is it a recapitulation of anyone else's experience of God. It is my experience. Men and women "direct" the Exercises, and even more of them "make" the Exercises, with considerable fruit, while knowing little or nothing about the experiences which produced them. Many people find help in Ignatian and Jesuit spirituality without ever having read a biography of Ignatius. A person need not, of course, know the whole personal history of Ignatius of Loyola in order to make a successful retreat or to benefit from the insights of Jesuit

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<sup>\*</sup>*Spiritual Exercises* (in italics) means the printed book, Spiritual Exercises (in roman but with capitals) indicates the making of a retreat.



spirituality. So even a director need not know that history in detail in order to be a good director. Nevertheless, I would surely contend that such detailed knowledge can be immensely helpful. For it can bring us deeper insight into Ignatius' text, along with better ability to apply it wisely to persons and circumstances of our own times.

Still further, the *Exercises* help us to be attentive to our own experience, to interpret it, and to grow from it in the love and service of the Lord and of our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Few will have the time or opportunity to study in detail how the *Exercises* came to be, the milieu by which their author was influenced and in which he acted, what he did, what he experienced, and the way in which he reflected on that experience.

This study, therefore, will present in brief simple fashion ten incidents or events which are turning points in Ignatius' life, and central themes of the *Exercises* which are closely related to those events. It will also point out some relations of the events and the themes to the circumstances of the sixteenth century. The study is not exactly a biography, nor is it an analysis of the *Exercises*. Rather, it is simply an attempt to broaden and deepen one's own involvement with the *Exercises*, in making them and in giving them. Our Jesuit heritage, the central place of the *Exercises* in our lives and in our work, the importance of reflection upon our own experiences in our continued growth in the Lord--all of these are among the reasons why we should look at what happened to Ignatius, how he responded to his experiences, and how that response became part of the *Exercises*.

This study is not an original work. It owes too much to the *Spiritual Exercises*, to Ignatius' *Autobiography*, and to various biographies of him; and beyond that, its conception and basic structure are deeply indebted to a little book which Father Jean-Claude Dhotel, S.J., of *Vie chrétienne* published in Paris: *Qui es-tu, Ignace de Loyola?* He composed this booklet in 1972 as a "celebration" for the three-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the canonization of Ignatius in 1622, and of the fiftieth anniversary of Pius XI's great letter in 1922 which, so to speak, "canonized" the *Spiritual Exercises*. At one time I thought of translating that booklet. But

I decided against simply putting the French text into English. Instead, while much here is translation, it is also the development, for American Jesuits in their circumstances, of an initiative taken by a French Jesuit confrère. For what I have done here, of course, Father Dhotel is in no way responsible. For what he has done in providing inspiration, insight, and material in his original work I am most grateful. So too, I hope, will be my fellow American Jesuits.

## 2. Setting Ignatius and the *Exercises* in Their Milieu

American school children memorize the date 1492 because that is when "Columbus sailed the ocean blue." That is not the first reason for its being an important date in Spain. In that year, as Spanish troops marched triumphantly into the Court of the Lions in the Alhambra at Granada, Spain brought to an end a seven-hundred-year-old crusade against the presence of Islam in that country.

Ignatius, born a year before in 1491, spent a youth in a milieu steeped in the forms and memories of a crusading Christianity. His manhood from his late twenties to the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540 coincided with the new presence of and possible conquest by the Reformation in Europe. His years in Rome from 1540 to his death in 1556 put him at the place from which Catholicism gathered its forces to recoup its losses in the old world and to spread the gospel in worlds old and new just recently discovered by Europeans. He could not avoid being touched by these worldwide complex events and the experiences they stimulated in his mind and heart. But he was even more deeply touched by his own individual and intimate experiences of personal conversion, ecstatic love, suicidal scruples, apostolic impatience, dull daily work, friendships deep enough for tears, and above all, by the experience of God--God everywhere and in everything, but most especially God in Jesus Christ. This study will try to put together some of those experiences and to show how Ignatius' life, times, and the *Exercises* come together in a unity.

## 3. The Structure of This Study

Our treatment will take the form of a drama in two acts, with a



prologue, eight scenes, and an epilogue. The prologue and each scene will contain (1) a specific event from the life of Ignatius, presented somewhat like a panel of a frieze, (2) a related text from his *Spiritual Exercises*, and (3) discussion of the contextual circumstances in which the event took place.

Some of the events or panels and most of the texts from the *Exercises*, especially in the early chapters, will be familiar to Jesuit readers. Their quite understandable reaction may be to skip over this familiar material. But the setting or context and its influence on both the experience and the *Exercises* may be less familiar and, consequently, may help them to look at the event and the text with a new eye.

A chronological table placed here at the start may be useful toward situating Ignatius amid the events of his time.

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#### CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

<u>Life of St. Ignatius</u>		<u>Contemporary Events</u>
His birth at Loyola.	1491	Siege of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella.
	1492	Columbus finds America. Annexation of Granada by Spain. Alexander VI (Borgia) pope.
	1494	Beginning of Italian wars.
	1497	Vasco da Gama goes around Cape of Good Hope.
	1498	Death of Savonarola.
	1503	Julius II pope. Erasmus' <i>Enchiridion of the Christian Soldier</i> .
	1505	Luther enters the Augustinians.
Page at Arévalo.	1506	Construction of St. Peter's begins in Rome.

	1509	Birth of Calvin. Henry VIII king of England. Portuguese in South-east Asia.
	1512	Council of Lateran V, abortive reform effort.
	1513	Leo X (Medici) pope.
"Atrocious crimes" at Azpeitia.	1515	Francis I of France. Philip Neri and Theresa of Avila born.
	1516	Charles V king of Spain. Machiavelli publishes <i>The Prince</i> . Thomas More writes <i>Utopia</i> .
	1517	Luther's 95 Theses.
Service with the Viceroy of Navarre.	1519	Charles V emperor. Magellan begins his voyage. Cortez in Mexico.
Siege of Pamplona. Ignatius wounded.	1521	Suleiman and the Turks at Belgrade. Diet of Worms, excommunication of Luther.
Montserrat and Manresa.	1522	Adrian VI, the reform pope and last non-Italian pope--until 1978.
Pilgrimage to Jerusalem.	1523	Clement VII (Medici) pope.
Arrest at Alcalá by Inquisition.	1526	Defeat of Empire by Turks at Mohacs. Capuchins founded.
Arrest again at Salamanca.	1527	Sack of Rome.
Studies in Spain. Arrival in Paris.	1528	Verrazzano off the American coast.
	1530	Lutheran Confession of Augsburg.
	1531	Henry VIII breaks with Rome. Conquest of Peru.
Montmartre: Vows of the first companions.	1534	Paul III pope. Cartier in Canada.
Ignatius leaves Paris.	1535	More and Fisher martyred. Geneva adopts the Reformation.
Ordination of the companions at Venice. Vision of La Storta.	1537	Venice and Turks at war. Charles Borromeo born.
Companions all together in Rome.	1538	Theatines, Barnabites, Somaschi developing.
The "deliberation" by the first companions.	1539	Coverdale's <i>Great Bible</i> .
Society of Jesus founded.	1540	Angela Merici (founder of Ursulines) dies.

Xavier departs for India. Ignatius elected superior general. First solemn professions.	1541	Michelangelo finishes the Last Judgment. Birth of El Greco. Calvin's <i>Institutes</i> . Turks take Buda and Hungary.
Three established Jesuit houses: Rome, Paris, Lisbon.	1542	Roman Inquisition begun. Portuguese in Japan.
	1543	Copernicus' astronomical work <i>De revolutionibus</i> .
Isabel Roser takes vows in Rome.	1545	Opening of Council of Trent.
Jesuits sent to Trent by Paul III. Death of Favre. Admittance of Borgia to Society. Jesuits in Brazil. Isabel Roser released from vows.	1546	Death of Luther.
	1547	Henry VIII dies. Ivan the Terrible begins reign in Russia. Cervantes born.
Paul III approves the Exercises.	1548	
Xavier in Japan. Ignatius ill.	1549	First English "Act of Uniformity."
Society of Jesus confirmed. Ignatius ill again.	1550	Julius III pope.
Crisis in Society in Portugal. Ignatius ill.	1551	Turkish threat to Vienna.
Death of Xavier.	1552	
Letter on Obedience. Ignatius often ill.	1553	Mary Tudor, queen of England.
Ignatius often ill. Nadal elected vicar-general.	1554	Pole "reconciles" England.
Ignatius admits Princess Juana of Spain to the Society.	1555	Marcellus II and Paul IV popes. Peace of Augsburg.
Death of Ignatius. Laynez vicar-general.	1556	Abdication of Charles V. Palestrina's "Mass of Pope Marcellus."



## PROLOGUE

### A NEW WORLD AS THE STAGE

#### *An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

No one knows for sure the day or month in 1491 when Ignatius was born. It was not great news that another child had been born to the already large family of Loyola in the Basque country. In the following year, there was great news; a new geographical world would be just off the horizon of Columbus' ship, the Santa Maria, while another new intellectual and artistic world had already dawned in the sunlight of the Renaissance. But the family and home of Ignatius were of neither of these new worlds. They had their hardy local roots far back into the Middle Ages. Printing was still a recent invention, and books were not a common item in the Loyola household. There might be a "book of the hours" as befitted a pious family and a book of accounts as befitted a well-to-do family.

The upheavals that were to awaken the modern world had begun, and it was the great good luck of Ignatius to be born in these times. Except that he would never regard it as luck. Rather, from the time of his turning to God, he would see this as part of the work of a God who "conducts Himself as one who labors" in all circumstances, in all ideas, in all men and women. A "contemplative in action," he would seek to see God in all things, in order to find God's will and to carry it out. He would be a man for that new world and for those new times.

#### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

. . . a mental representation of the place. It will be here to see the great extent of the surface of the earth, inhabited by so many different peoples, and especially to see the house and room of our Lady in the city of Nazareth in the province of Galilee.

The Three Divine Persons look down upon the whole expanse or circuit of all the earth, filled with human beings, in such great diversity in dress and manner of acting. Some are white, some black; some at peace, and some at war; some weeping, some laughing; some well, some sick; some coming into the world, some dying . . . (Contemplation on the Incarnation, *Spiritual Exercises*, [102-106]).\*

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\* Throughout this study, by permission of Loyola University Press, Chicago,

*A Discussion of Contextual Circumstances*

When a retreatant comes to the contemplation of the Incarnation in the *Spiritual Exercises*, the vision which Ignatius presents is as wide as the world and as specific as a particular television image. It is the whole earth seen by an astronaut on the moon and the single laugh of a child in a sunny backyard. St. Luke's account of the Incarnation is cast in the same mold. It is specific enough to name a month, a province, a town, a tribe. But when the angel speaks, the perspective opens out on the whole "house of Jacob," and beyond that to a "reign without end." And when Mary goes into the hill country, to a particular town and house, she chants the glory of a God whose "mercy is from age to age," who looks upon "all generations," and who, in those generations, is engaged with the mighty and the lowly, the hungry and the rich.

For Ignatius, a life in which God worked through particulars came to embrace the "extent of the surface of the earth." How God showed his will to Ignatius at each step of his life was for him inextricably linked with what God had willed and revealed as his all embracing plan on a particular day in a Nazareth house.

The particulars of this man's life were simple enough. A modern application blank for an employment would include the following: Hair: light; eyes: dark; wears moustache and beard; height: about 5-feet 2-inches; born in 1491 (?) at Azpeitia in the province of Guipúzcoa, Spain. Distinguishing physical characteristics (after 1521): a certain lameness of the right leg. Previous occupations: successively page, gentleman, wanderer, student, priest, superior general of the Society of Jesus. Places of residence: successively Azpeitia, Arévalo, Nájera, Barcelona, Alcalá, Salamanca, Paris, Venice, Rome.

Ignatius was a Basque. He was obstinate, headstrong, sometimes taciturn, but also ardent and playful. He was loyal to the crown of Spain as

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the translations of the *Exercises* (sometimes with slight rearrangements) are those of Louis J. Puhl, S.J., and those of St. Ignatius' *Autobiography* are those of W. J. Young, S.J. The complete titles are given below on pp. 329-330.



was all his family; three of his brothers died for the glory of their king, Charles (who was also the emperor Charles V), in places as far distant as Mexico and Hungary. The family was even more loyal to the Catholic faith and to the code of chivalry, even if the practice of either did not always measure up to their ideals.

His mother died when he was very young. His father died when he was about sixteen. Sometime earlier, in 1506, he had sent Ignatius to Arévalo as a page at the court of the royal treasurer. In 1517 Ignatius went to the court of the duke of Nájera, the viceroy of Navarre, on the Spanish frontier. There, at Pamplona, while he was in the service of the Hapsburg king of Spain against the troops of the Valois king of France, a cannon ball put an end to one of Ignatius' careers on May 20, 1521.

What career? Through the centuries there have always been some who liked to say that Ignatius was above all a soldier, and that the Society (or Company) of Jesus had been modelled on an army, and that that was clear from terms such as "company" and "general" and "obedience." But these words, as has been remarked more than once, are not originally of military origin, and the discipline for which the Jesuits are supposedly notable was far from being a notable trait of the armed bands of the sixteenth century. More importantly, Ignatius himself was hardly a professional soldier. The sword he carried was at least as much a part of his wardrobe as it was a military weapon. When he did unsheath it, it was more in a nighttime brawl or to gain the admiring glance of a woman. A real sense of honor, of chivalry, of fidelity to his king, yes; but a real sense of strategy, tactics, or even discipline, hardly at all.

Shakespeare's characterization of the "soldier" in the seven ages of man depicted in *As You Like It* (act 3, scene 2) well describes Ignatius too:

. . . Then a soldier  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth.

If Ignatius' faith was real, his virtue was, to say the least, deficient. For example, we will never know exactly what happened at Azpeitia during the 1515 carnival, when he was about twenty-four, but there on the police record

is the accusation of "atrocious crimes, carried out during the night, with premeditation and involving ambush and treachery." All we do know is that Ignatius got out of that scrape all too easily. It was a scrape in which his priest brother was also involved.

He himself summed up these earlier years in the first sentence of his autobiography: "Up to his twenty-sixth year he was a man given over to the vanities of the world, and took a special delight in the exercise of arms, with a great and vain desire of winning glory" (*Autobiography*, no. 1, translated by W. J. Young, S.J.).

What was happening in that world in which he sought glory? The curtain was rising on one of the great changes in history, a change which had many interlocking events. Three of those events took place in the first three years of Ignatius' life and they influenced the later years when he and his companions were the first Jesuits.

The first event was the capture of Granada in 1492. However, when Islam was finally thus pushed out of western Europe, it exerted even more pressure on eastern Europe, and Charles V's power was worn away in waging war year upon year on his eastern borders. Partly for that reason he could not do what he wanted to do to curb the Reformation in his possessions, and it was on the offensive everywhere when the Jesuits were asked to respond to it. In addition, those wars with Islam had earlier kept Ignatius and his companions from going to Jerusalem, their first ambition as a group. As they had agreed, they then turned to Rome to offer their services directly to the pope.

The second great event was the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492 and the opening of the route to the Indies by Vasco da Gama in 1497. The world grew large beyond imagining and new lands opened for the preaching of the gospel. Xavier left for the Indies in the very year that the Society was formed, even before its approval by the pope. By the time he got to Japan in 1549, other Jesuits were also at the opposite end of the world, for they landed in Brazil in that same year.

The third great event was the Italian wars from 1494 onward. They were sordid and confusing and they harmed the Church and Italy in devastating ways. They were near the beginning of the quarrel between Spain and France



which occupied the two greatest powers of Europe for more than a century. But they also had a part in opening the way for the Italian Renaissance to become a European phenomenon. When, at Ignatius' own decision, the early Jesuits took up the work of institutionalized education, the Society entered upon an inculturation process with the world of the Renaissance "humanities."

The service of the Church was at the heart of each of these new works. That service became possible in part because of the great events of the day. Those works were undertaken in the conviction that God was concerned about the "whole expanse or circuit of all the earth," and that he would be found there in all its regions and in all its activities.

God would especially be found in a Church which needed "reform in head and members." The Borgia cardinal, Alexander VI, became pope in 1492 when Ignatius was a babe-in-arms. Among his all too famous children were Lucrezia and Cesar Borgia. Fifty years later, Francis Borgia, grandson of yet another of the pope's children, entered the Society of Jesus and eventually became its third general. Luther was Ignatius' senior; Calvin was his junior. Ignatius himself was suspected of heresy on and off for fifteen years and the Inquisition touched his life directly because of the supposed novelties of the *Spiritual Exercises*. But the reform which he wished to bring to the Church was from the interior, in a renewal of spirit in utter loyalty to her and attentive to the needs of the current age.

No one was with Ignatius when he died on the morning of July 31, 1556. In that same year, a worn-out Charles V had abdicated the imperial throne. The most far-flung empire of the West since imperial Rome would soon be dismembered; but the thousand Jesuits at the time of Ignatius' death had already travelled beyond the farthest boundaries of that empire. They were "everywhere in the world," among persons "in such great diversity in dress and manner of acting. Some were white, some black; some at peace and some at war; some weeping, some laughing; some well, some sick; some coming into the world and some dying . . ." Meanwhile Ignatius himself had been in his small room in the heart of Rome, working to the last, as he had for fifteen years, to read the signs of the times and to respond to the most urgent and most universal needs. He left to his brethren themselves the *Spiritual Ex-*

*ercises* and the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*. In the *Constitutions* they could see the *Spiritual Exercises* animate the structure and life of the Society itself as these *Exercises* had animated their own personal lives--after those *Exercises* had first been born out of the life and experiences of Ignatius.

How did it all happen? When and where did it all begin in this new world? It began at Pamplona on Pentecost Monday, May 20, 1521.



## ACT I. A MAN IN THE SERVICE OF CHRIST

### Scene 1. May 20, 1521: Dreams and Reflections

#### *An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

The Navarrese had welcomed the French army when it marched on Pamplona in the spring of 1521. They had never forgiven Ferdinand the Catholic for taking their land for Spain. (The Xavier family was on the French side in this political quarrel.) The duke of Nájera's lieutenant, De Beaumont, had left the city with his Spanish troops, seeing the situation as hopeless. The French had just entered the city on the morning of May 20, 1521, and they were now assembled before the citadel. Ignatius was there with a small group of Spanish reinforcements. His sense of honor made the flight of De Beaumont seem reprehensible. He persuaded Herrera, the commandant of the garrison at the citadel, to reject the terms of surrender and to stand and fight.

With no priest present, Ignatius, familiar with an old medieval custom, confessed his sins to a companion in arms. Then he mounted the ramparts and for six hours with his comrades stood up to the cannonading of the best artillerymen in Europe. The French finally pounded an opening in the wall, and as troops prepared to enter the citadel, Ignatius' leg was shattered by one of their cannonballs. When he fell, the heart went out of the resistance and the garrison wisely surrendered. So ended Ignatius' of Loyola's career at arms--in honor and in the service of his king, but in a rather minor military incident which would have been unnoticed except for its effect on this man.

The French, too, were honorable, and on the testimony of Ignatius himself they treated him "with great kindness and courtesy" (Autobiog, no. 1), tried to set the broken leg, took care of him for two weeks, and transported him in a litter home to Loyola, about sixty miles away. But they had made a mess of the limb-setting, and the doctors at Azpeitia tried to repair the damage. They broke the bone again. Years later, Ignatius recalled the agony by simply terming it a "butchery," but one in which he said not a word and gave no sign of pain "other than clenching his fists" (Autobiog, 3).



He became very ill, so ill that on June 24 the doctors advised him to make his last confession. He grew worse. On June 28, the vigil of St. Peter and Paul, the doctors told him that "if he showed no improvements by midnight, he could consider himself as good as dead" (Autobiog, 3). On the morning of June 29, he rallied and began a rapid recovery.

On June 30, the Spanish retook Pamplona.

#### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

If such a summons of an earthly king to his subjects deserves our attention, how much more worthy of consideration is Christ our Lord, the Eternal King, before whom is assembled the whole world (The Kingdom of Christ, *Exercises*, [95]).

#### *A Discussion of Contextual Circumstances*

The recovery may have gone on rapidly, but Ignatius was still distressed by the second bonesetting because it had left one leg shorter than the other, and had resulted in an obvious and unsightly protuberance. He asked if it could be remedied. The surgeons said yes, but only with pain "greater than all he had already suffered." He still desperately wanted the fine figure of a courtier and so he decided to go ahead with yet another operation. The surgeons cut, hacked, and sawed, and then the leg was "continually stretched, which caused him many days of martyrdom" (Autobiog, 4-5). The operation was a success, but the days were tedious, for he was a bedridden convalescent for a long time. That convalescence brought back his health and transformed his whole life.

To while away the time, he asked for books of chivalry. Such were not to be found in the Loyola house, but the *Life of Christ* and the *Golden Legend* were. Better than nothing. . . .

The *Life of Christ* by the Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony, was more than a simple telling of the Gospels. It was also a book of spirituality. The *Golden Legend* (a rather misleading translation of the Latin title *Legenda aurea*, "golden deeds to be read about") by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine (1230?-1298) was a rhapsodic concatenation of anecdotes and citations from the lives of the saints, all pointing to how they had done great things, as had Jesus, out of love of God our Lord.

One could hardly have expected Ignatius to be attracted by two such books, but he was. To do great deeds, was not that the dream which he had pursued? But it all got mixed up. Sometimes it was a temporal king, sometimes the Eternal King, sometimes our Lady, sometimes a different lady. One after another, daydreams floated by.

That other lady: Years later he spoke of her as a "lady of no ordinary rank; neither a countess nor duchess, but of a nobility much higher than any of these" (*Autobiog*, 6). For a man of Ignatius' background and social standing that would, indeed, have been a most extravagant dream, but his imagination in the house there at Loyola took free rein.

Then another daydream came in its place: St. Dominic had done such things, why not myself? St. Francis has done this other thing, and what about myself? Couldn't I do it too?

Think of all the stories of what the saints had done, to be a hermit in the desert, to be clothed in sackcloth, to eat only the herbs growing wild; or to go barefoot on a journey to Jerusalem or to hole up in a cave, undertaking the most savage of penances. Just like the saints. For the love of God.

Love. . . . Of God? Or was it in turn for that lady who was not of the petty nobility, not a countess nor a duchess . . . ? And thus it went, daydream after daydream, day after day.

It is clear in reading Ignatius' *Autobiography* that at this time imagination was certainly a dominant part of his makeup. Dream succeeded dream but, perhaps at first without his being aware of it, his self-reflective ability also entered into play, and such reflection posed a question for him.

When he was thinking of the things of the world, he was filled with delight, but when afterwards he dismissed them from weariness, he was dry and dissatisfied. And when he thought of going barefoot to Jerusalem and of eating nothing but herbs and of performing the other rigors he saw that the saints had performed, he was consoled not only when he entertained these thoughts, but even after dismissing them he remained cheerful and satisfied (*Autobiog*, 8).

For the present this was just a simple statement, but it was the point of departure of one of the most basic traits of Ignatian spirituality, the experience of discernment which looks back upon the imagination and upon



the sensibility, not in order to curb them but to understand them and to take from them what best they have to offer.

He was rather sad after certain thoughts, rather joyous after others. Where did they come from? At this point he was not able to answer that question, but obviously he would prefer happiness, joy. Later as these experiences continued to be repeated and as he set himself to look at them after they had happened, he made a simple statement in the face of the killjoys of religion who see in the adventure of the spirit nothing but a sad pilgrimage in a valley of tears, in the face of all the sorrow-mongers whom western Christianity has managed to produce in literature and in the arts. He proclaimed this simple good news:

It is a characteristic of God to give true happiness and spiritual joy in suppressing all the sadness and trouble which the enemy inspires in us. It is characteristic of the enemy to fight against this joy and this spiritual consolation (*Exercises*, [329]).

The first criterion for the discernment of spirits was simple, clear, and neat, perhaps too much so, but the experience had begun.

Between the temporal king and the Eternal King, between the service of a lady of high degree and of our Lady, between the world and God, Ignatius had made a definitive choice in preferring joy to sorrow. But it was not long before he had to reckon with the distance yet to go between dream and reality. A cannon ball does not suddenly wipe out a whole past life-history. His past came up again before him in his memory, not in the attractive colors of glory and love, but in the light of the holiness of God. It was a past that belonged to a sinner in a world full of sin. His path then would be that of a penitent. Among other projects, a pilgrimage became increasingly a preoccupation.

Once he had made his decision the bad old dreams vanished. One night he saw our Lady with the Infant Jesus.

. . . he received most abundant consolation. . . . he felt so great a disgust with his past life, especially with its offenses of the flesh, that he thought all such images which had formerly occupied his mind were wiped out (*Autobiog*, 10).

Here then was the first objective sign of the conversion of Ignatius. Something had happened.

Reasonable people, serious people, may be astonished that decisions of such importance for the life of a man had been conceived in the midst of dreams, imagination, and sentiments. Surely this could hardly be a serious way of acting. But in that case we ought to recognize that God himself is not acting seriously. From the time of Jacob to that of Joseph, from the child Samuel to the Magi, from Jeremiah to the Apostles Peter and Paul, how many occasions have there been on which God has spoken "in a dream" to his friends. Perhaps this is the most vivid way for God to have us understand that his plans are not ours, that they are far beyond our estimation of what the real and the possible might be. The important thing is to be able to interpret these dreams and that also is a gift of God. . . .

Four stages seem to have marked this stay of Ignatius' at Loyola:

1. He had been attracted by Christ and the saints. The image of Jesus which was presented to him was that of an engaging leader who invited men to his service.
2. He had been attracted by the heroic aspect of this service, the opportunity to do great things, difficult things, to be distinguished in the sight of this new king as a knight who wishes to accomplish acts of valor.
3. Whenever he let his imagination go, he had become aware of the necessity of making a choice. It was impossible to pursue two dreams at the same time, to march in the company of Christ and to gain the favors of his lady. This seems to have been his first experience of spiritual discernment.
4. But it was impossible to follow Christ without gradually coming to resemble him. Conversion was not simply a thunder clap. The lights received at Loyola had put in relief the dark shadows of his life. The road which he would have to take would be that of penitence, but in joy, to accomplish great things, to make himself worthy of serving Jesus Christ.

These were not simply the dreams of a time of convalescence but rather the beginnings of a plan on the way to realization.

The last weeks of his convalescence were to be spent in putting together for himself what had taken place. He chose a special fine paper and

very carefully, almost as a neophyte illuminator of manuscripts, he copied out the central passages of his readings. He put the words of Jesus in red; those of our Lady in blue. The rest of the time he prayed, without looking for anything new, simply going back over the words which he had understood in order to taste and experience them deep down in the heart.

For Ignatius the special time for this prayer was at night as he looked up at the sky and the stars.

He often did [this] and for long stretches at a time, because when doing so he felt within himself a powerful urge to be serving our Lord (*Autobiog*, 11).

Because everything was going well now, all he had to do was put the plan into action. First, Jerusalem, and then, he did not know. Perhaps the Carthusians or the wandering life of a beggar. The important thing was to get started.

It was the beginning of springtime, March 1522.



## Scene 2. March 25, 1522: The New Life

### *An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

*An all-night vigil at arms at Montserrat in Catalonia, in the Benedictine monastery built far up on the side of the "Sawtooth Mountain."*

*Then, as today, there were crowds of pilgrims coming to visit the ancient miraculous statue of the Black Virgin. Among those pilgrims was Ignatius Loyola in sack cloth. Just a little while before, he had given his courtier's clothes to a beggar and now had hung up as an ex-voto offering his sword and his dagger.*

*He was on his way toward Barcelona, the seaport from which he was going to embark for Jerusalem by way of Rome and Venice. Four days earlier he had arrived at Montserrat and, helped by a French monk, Jean Chanon, he had prepared for a general confession. Just yesterday he had received absolution.*

*All through the night Ignatius, sometimes standing, sometimes on his knees, kept his vigil at arms. On the morning of March 25 during the Mass for the Feast of the Annunciation he received the body of Christ, and as dawn broke he left the monastery and set out on his pilgrimage.*

*But he did not take the road to Barcelona toward the east but rather went a little ways toward the north. It is not at all clear why he did so, but quite probably it was because Jean Chanon had suggested to him that he might prepare for his pilgrimage by a few days of retreat near Montserrat in a village where he could stay either at a hospital or at the house of the Dominicans.*

*That village was Manresa.*

### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

*Imagine you see the chief of all the enemy. Consider how he summons innumerable demons, and scatters them throughout the whole world, to bind men with chains.*

*Consider Christ our Lord, standing in a lowly place beautiful and attractive. Consider how he chooses so many persons, apostles, disciples, and sends them throughout the whole world to help all men (The Two Standards, *Exercises*, [140-146]).*

*A Discussion of Contextual Circumstances*

It takes some imagination to picture today the Manresa of which Ignatius would say, a long time after he had been there, with respect to all of his decisions, "I refer to Manresa. . . ." But at least Montserrat, off in the distance, has not changed, nor, a little ways out into the countryside, the banks of the Cardoner with the caves near it.

The man who knocked at the door of the hospital of St. Lucy on the evening of March 25, 1522, was by no means already *Saint* Ignatius of Loyola. Thirty years after that date look at what he himself said about himself.

It will help to an understanding of how our Lord dealt with this soul who, although still blind, had a great desire to serve him to the best of his knowledge, and was set on performing great penance, not so much with an idea of satisfying for his sins, as to placate and please God. Thus when he remembered to do some penance which the saints had performed, he resolved to do the same and even more. All his consolation was in these thoughts. He never took a spiritual view of anything, nor even knew the meaning of humility, or charity, or patience, or discretion as a rule and measure of these virtues. His whole purpose was to perform these great, external works, for so had acted the saints for God's glory, without thought of any more particular circumstance (*Autobiog*, 14).

This careful judgment is not simply false humility on Ignatius' part. He recognized great desires for holiness and especially he recognized that the Lord was leading him along. But he also noted, very importantly, the blindness of his soul and his lack of discretion or discernment. He did not understand that "the great exterior works" of the saints were only manifestations of their interior virtues. When those virtues were lacking there was great danger that the imitation of the saints would simply turn to foolishness, to vainglory and then finally to pride. As to the lack of discretion or discernment, it would be amply evident in several other stories in his autobiography.

There is, for example, the story of the Moslem whom Ignatius met just as he was on his way to Montserrat. As their conversation about the Blessed Virgin got more and more heated, Ignatius left a decision up to his mule. If the mule took the more obvious road, the one on which the Moslem had gone ahead, Ignatius would go in pursuit of the infidel in order to kill him; if the mule took the narrower road, he would let the man alone. Our Lord wished, Ignatius said, that the mule should take the narrower road of



mercy toward the poor fellow. So much the better for him. Even if the story later became the source of certain *boutades* about government in the Society, there are other criteria than that for learning God's will. Again, when he generously gave his clothes to a beggar, he could at least have thought of the possibility that the poor man would as a suspect thief fall into the hands of the police. And that is exactly what happened.

At Manresa Ignatius let his hair and his nails grow long because previously he had taken care of them, as if holiness and cleanliness could not get along together. He refused to eat meat or to drink wine; he went a whole week without eating anything and, as one could expect, he fell sick.

So much for some of these indiscretions. As for the temptation to vainglory, that was somewhat more subtle.

The first part of Ignatius' stay at Manresa from March to July was a period of calm. Each morning he went out to beg his food; he assisted at the Divine Office in the cathedral--Mass, Vespers, and Compline. The rest of the time he prayed or dealt with spiritual persons. He went to confession and communion each Sunday, something which was really rare at that time. The reading he especially liked to do was the story of the Passion. In remembering his past life, he could well be there at the foot of the cross speaking familiarly to the Lord "as one friend speaks to another."

How is it, my Creator, that you have become man. How is it that you have gone from eternal life to death here in time that thus you might die for my sins? And I, what have I done for Christ, what ought I to do for Christ? (*Exercises*, [53]).

All the same, at other moments there were some rather strange happenings.

While he was in this hospice, it often happened to him in broad daylight to see something in the air close to him, which gave him great consolation because it was very beautiful. He could not make out clearly what the thing was, but somehow it appeared to him to have the form of a serpent. It was bright with objects that shone like eyes, although they were not eyes. He found great delight and consolation in looking at this thing, and the more he saw it the greater grew his consolation. When it disappeared it left him displeased (*Autobiog*, 19).

Physicians today might wonder about the physical reactions of a man almost starving himself; psychologists might have serious questions to ask.



At another time a thought came to him connected with this vision, although it was distinct from the vision itself. "How can you stand a life like this for the seventy years you have yet to live?" This time he answered tit for tat. "You poor creature! Can you promise me even one hour of life?" (*Autobiog*, 20). When the temptation was clear and when he recognized that it brought discouragement, Ignatius did not forget the lesson learned at Loyola. He reacted quickly and well, but he learned in days to come that the "enemy" was able to change himself into "an angel of light." "He begins by suggesting thoughts that are suited to a devout soul, and ends by suggesting his own." Therefore, "we must carefully observe the whole course of our thoughts," because it is only at the end that "the enemy of human nature can be seen and recognized by the trail of evil marking his course" (*Exercises*, [332-334]).

This form covered with things which sparkled like eyes, could it be simply a projection of an all too human feeling? Later while still at Manresa, when Ignatius was very ill and thought that he was dying, the thought came to him "that he was a just man." This was part of the move, the step from vanity to the terrible temptation of pride. But at that point he knew how to recognize the origin of such a seductive vision. He cried out aloud to the ladies who came to him and said "that for the love of God, if ever they saw him at the point of death again, they should cry out and remind him that he was a sinner" (*Autobiog*, 32).

But at this time things were not yet that clear. He recognized changes taking place in him around the middle of this summer . . . a sort of tedium, a sort of discouragement which took away all taste for prayer. At other times it would seem as if the burden of sadness just vanished. But he was not the master of these changes and was no longer able to control his dreams. It seemed that he depended upon someone else, with the terror of no longer being his own master.

Ignatius did not yet know the kind of death through which he would have to pass. He wanted to give glory to God but by the means which he himself chose. God, accordingly, left him for a while to his own strength, until he could understand that the power of God would show itself in the weakness of man.

From July to October, in one of the little rooms in the Dominican house, he passed through a terrible depression. The *Spiritual Exercises*, [317], describe what this kind of depression was. "Darkness of soul, turmoil of spirit, inclination to what is low and earthly, restlessness rising from many disturbances and temptations which lead to want of faith, want of hope, want of love. The soul is wholly slothful, tepid, sad, and separated, as it were, from its Creator and Lord."

At Montserrat Ignatius had made a serious and full confession of the sins of his life. The *Exercises* speak (in [56]) of reviewing one's life year by year and period by period, considering the place where one lived, the dealings which one had, the offices which one held, and the like. Now the father of lies would come to tempt him right at the most elementary level. After the sin of the angels and the sin of Adam, one mortal sin was enough to send a man tumbling into hell . . . that man was oneself. . . .

Suddenly he would feel himself separated, separated from God and from all creation; alone, he was nothing. The feeling is vividly described in *Exercises*, [58-59]: What am I, I myself, in comparison with all men and what are all men compared with the angels and saints of paradise and what is all creation in comparison with God? Then I alone, what can I be? Corruption, loathsomeness and abscess, contagion. . . . I wish to be united to God and yet look how I am separated from Him as much as ignorance is separated from wisdom, weakness from power, iniquity from justice, wickedness from goodness.

In this complete confusion he had the foreboding that he might go back on his previous resolution. He had to face that. He multiplied his penances; he fasted for an entire week; he spent hours and hours in prayer; he consulted his confessor. None of it helped. The taste of death filled his mouth. The dizziness of suicide came then as the final temptation from him who was "a murderer from the beginning." There in Ignatius' little room was a large hole whose bottom he could not see. He was going to throw himself into it.

Right at the edge of the abyss, his faithfulness hung on by the thin thread of his resolution to do nothing to offend a loving Lord. Of himself he was no longer anything. Wounded to the death, he cried out "Help me,



O Lord, since I find no help from men nor from any creature. No trial would be too great for me to bear if I thought there was any hope of finding that help. Do you, O Lord, show me where I can find it, and even though I should have to follow a little dog to find it, I would do so" (*Autobiog*, 23). And it was then, he said, that "the Lord wanted me to awake as if from a dream."

Ignatius had discovered the depths of humility, and he could follow that with a cry of admiration and boundless love as he would "pass in review all creatures. . . . The angels . . . have prayed for me. . . . The saints have asked favors for me. And the heavens, sun, moon, stars, and elements, the fruits, birds, fishes, and other animals--why have they all been at my service?" (see *Exercises*, [60]).

Later in the *Exercises* Ignatius refashioned the simple meditations of this period, not in order to make others go through the same trials which he had but in order that they might learn again to love humbly and humanly. "If because of my faults I forget the love of the eternal Lord, at least the fear of these punishments will keep me from falling into sin" ([65]). That is why all of these particular meditations find their culmination in gratitude, so that sin might be known in the midst of the tenderness and mercy of the Creator and Lord.

During the last months of his stay at Manresa, Ignatius allowed himself to be enlightened by God who "treated him just as a schoolmaster treats a little boy when he teaches him" (*Autobiog*, 27). This was a time of grace when "the Creator and Lord in person communicates himself to the devout soul in quest of the divine will" (*Exercises*, [15]).

What was the nature of these communications? They were not visions or apparitions. When Ignatius said "I saw," it meant "I understood, I got the meaning of it." They were intuitions or inward visions with the character of ineluctable certitude. When reading Ignatius' account of them, one is struck by the sparseness, the poverty, of their imaginative elements (although Ignatius seems to be one of the very few mystics who had an experience which he would express in musical terms, "keys of an organ"). What is important is what he did "see" with so great an enlightenment that "these things appeared to be something altogether new" (*Autobiog*, 30). These things which were seen contributed to the birth of the *Exercises*.



The first experience was of the Most Holy Trinity as "three keys of an organ" or a musical chord, each note contributing to the perfect harmony of all three. He was at that time engaged in prayer on the steps of the monastery of St. Dominic. So great was the impression upon him that he was no longer master of himself. A procession came out of the monastery. He followed it mechanically without being able to hold back his tears. During all his life he would feel overwhelming devotion every time he prayed to the Holy Trinity (*Autobiog*, 28).

This was a central experience for Ignatius. This mystery of the Trinity is sometimes so impoverished by speculation that it ends up almost a celestial algebra. For Ignatius, however it became for his whole spiritual life that from which everything came and toward which everything returned in a perpetual movement and communication. He who habitually contemplates the Trinity is no longer able to stop or rest in self-satisfaction. God is there, "always ever greater," to which the response in prayer and action is "always more" (*magis*). This *magis* is no longer an ascetical performance but rather the movement of a person caught up and carried away in God Himself.

Another time there was represented to his understanding with great spiritual delight the manner in which God had created the world. It had the appearance of something white out of which rays were coming, and it was out of this that God made light (*Autobiog*, 29).

Ignatius perceived God "as someone who works and labors for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth," and all created things descend "from above as the rays of light from the sun, and as the waters flow from their fountains" (*Exercises*, [236-237]). This contemplation brought him to "see God in all things, "to become that contemplative in action which characterizes the man who lives in the spirit of Ignatius. It brought him to respect things and persons. There is the story that, every time Ignatius met one of his brethren in the house in Rome, his face would light up with so grand a smile that he had to watch this almost reflex action which could seem strange to those who did not know its cause. In just the same way, he could say to the novices, "By observing one another you grow in devotion and praise God our Lord, whom each one should endeavor to recognize in his neighbor as in his image" (*Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, [250]).

The same kind of white ray he saw on another occasion during Mass at the moment of the elevation of the Host (*Autobiog*, 29). The Body of Christ in the Eucharist was not for him simply an inert presence, but the radiant center of the world in the state of permanent creation.

The image of God which perfectly resembles God is as a matter of fact the humanity of Jesus Christ. Frequently at Manresa Ignatius said he saw it "with interior eyes . . . many times . . . and each time for a long time" (*Autobiog*, 29).

His devotion to Christ did not just begin there. It was part of his Spanish faith and it took hold of him during his convalescence. But Manresa set the humanity of Christ in the whole ensemble of creation. Just as is true of every other creature, so too that humanity came forth from God in order to return to God. But in it the Son of God is incarnate, invested with a *mission*. Jesus Christ is the *person sent* by the Father.

The contemplations on the mysteries of the life of Christ come in the *Exercises* at the point where the Son offers himself to his Father, and enters fully into life in this world in order to save men by rescuing them from the power of evil and inviting them to follow him. Therefore, because Christ, in order to accomplish this mission, called disciples to himself, for Ignatius to conform oneself to Jesus Christ meant to respond to the call of Christ in order in turn to be sent as Christ had been sent, to offer oneself wholly and completely to the task as Christ had offered himself, for the salvation of the world.

Through these revelations of the Trinity, creation, the Eucharist, and the humanity of Christ, the "Schoolmaster" had just about finished his teaching and the student later had the audacity to say:

These things which he saw gave him at the time great strength, and were always a striking confirmation of his faith, so much so that he has often thought to himself that if there were no Scriptures to teach us these matters of faith, he was determined to die for them, merely because of what he had seen (*Autobiog*, 29).

In another vision or illumination on the banks of the Cardoner came a decisive synthesis. Ignatius had gone to the little church of St. Paul the Hermit. After a certain amount of time spent praying on the steps, he sat down and turned his face to the river which there ran deep. As he sat,



The eyes of his understanding began to open. He beheld no vision, but he saw and understood many things, spiritual as well as those concerning faith and learning. This took place with so great an illumination that these things appeared to be something altogether new. He cannot point out the particulars of what he then understood, although they were many, except that he received a great illumination in his understanding. This was so great that in the whole course of his past life right up to his sixty-second year, if he were to gather all the help he had received from God, and everything he knew, and add them together, he does not think that they would equal all that he received at that one time (*Autobiog*, 30).

Ignatius did not all of a sudden become some kind of walking encyclopedia. What he must have perceived was an englobing view of the one reality of faith and knowledge, that is, the central mysteries of God's revelation and the purposes of the present world in that first quarter of the sixteenth century. It embraced the place of man in the universe, and the meaning of his own existence in creation as it was ordered by God. Perhaps in the meditation on the Foundation in the *Exercises* one might begin to find, though in words too spare for the experience, the content of this enlightenment at the Cardoner.

Man is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.

The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.

Hence, man is to make use of them in as far as they help him in the attainment of this end, and he must rid himself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to him.

Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things.

Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created (*Exercises*, [23]).

We live lives of meaning and freedom in the midst of the marvels of creation, in knowing where we are going and where the world is going. If we are free with respect to all other things, it is not because we are insensible to the beauty of the universe, to the power and glory of the human person, or to the joys of life. It is because no one of us yet knows what will best bring us toward that which God wants of us. In freedom we know only one thing, that we ought to start along the path which Christ has



opened up for the liberation of the world, and we want only one thing, to be the servant of the Lord for this great design.

In the course of this period of illumination, a certain number of external characteristics of Ignatius' behavior changed, seemingly small but quite significant.

From now on he spent a lot of time in conversation with people. Was not this to lose time which he might have spent in meeting the Lord? At least time that he needed for sleep? As if by chance, it was at the moment that he did go to bed that the most elevated thoughts came to him. "He began to doubt whether these illuminations came from the good spirit. He concluded that he had better not have anything to do with them and give the time determined on to sleep. And this he did" (*Autobiog*, 29). And finally his health; he agreed to dress more in accord with his needs.

This may seem a pretty small balance sheet. What was important was the reason for these changes and the way in which Ignatius decided upon them. He made up his mind only after taking account of two phenomena, consolation in prayer and the apostolic results of his conversations.

Personal inspiration is not always a sure guide, and since the "visions" of "the serpent" Ignatius knew that not every consolation comes necessarily from God. Personal discernment was necessary along with discernment on the part of others, in this case on the part of his confessor. But it was Ignatius who got the idea and it was he in the last resort who decided to eat meat. By now, even if only embryonically, there were already present the four elements of the process of Ignatius decision-making: the suggestion, the personal discernment, the involvement on the part of the Church or its confirmation, and the decision itself. The spirit of obedience does not result in robots.

But just as important was the apostolic motive for the changes which Ignatius made.

At this time there were many days when he was very eager to hold forth on spiritual things, and to find those who were likewise interested in them. But the time was drawing near that he had set for his departure for Jerusalem (*Autobiog*, 34).

He was no longer anxious to be a solitary Carthusian. He wanted to aid others just as he had been helped. The apostolate and companionship

were the germs of what would later be the plan for the Society of Jesus. Nevertheless, it was as a solitary, in order, as he said, to exercise himself "in faith, in hope, and in charity," that he was ready to go on his journeys again. On the little bridge where he had entered Manresa he said farewell to his friends on February 18, 1523.

The Hapsburg-Valois wars had begun a year before. A new and reforming pope, Adrian VI the last non-Italian pontiff, until John Paul II in 1978, tried unsuccessfully to purge the papacy of its scandalous abuses, and died within a year, hated by his cardinals. Henry VIII had, by edict of Pope Leo X, become "Defender of the Faith." The Reformation under Luther was progressing apace in Germany.

Ignatius set out for the Holy Land.

### Scene 3. September 4, 1523: The Humanity of Jesus Christ

#### *An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

Today Jerusalem. Ignatius and the other pilgrims had come into port at Jaffa on August 24, but for various bureaucratic reasons they were not able finally to leave their ship until August 31. Today, in the company of a Turkish escort and a Franciscan priest, all mounted on little donkeys, they stopped to recollect themselves before they would for the first time see Jerusalem, the Holy City. They went forward in silence.

In a short time, they saw the cross at the head of processions of monks who had come out to welcome them. They got off their donkeys, then moved on a little. All of a sudden, there was Jerusalem, caelestis urbs Jerusalem, shining brilliantly in the sunlight and flooding Ignatius with joy!

The long pilgrim journey from Barcelona to Jerusalem and back took Ignatius almost eleven months. He had taken ship from Barcelona on March 12, and before he arrived at Gaeta he had gone through five days of storm on the sea. In Italy the plague was raging and the gates of several of the cities were closed. He arrived at Rome all alone on Palm Sunday. He received the blessing of the pope and set out for Venice on April 7. He stayed for several weeks in Venice in search of a ship. Finally, he was able to embark for Cyprus on July 14.

He entered Jerusalem on September 4 but stayed there only twenty days. Then he was on his way back to Barcelona, which he reached in mid-February, 1524.

In his Autobiography the story of this journey takes up two of the ten chapters of the book, as if Ignatius had been especially happy to tell it. There were memories that were very precise, adventures both comic and tragic, and from one end of the story to the other, the atmosphere of youthful impulsiveness.

Ignatius may have undergone a conversion but he still remained himself.

#### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

See in imagination the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Consider its length, its breadth; whether level or through valleys and over hills. Observe also the place or cave where Christ is born; whether big or little; whether high or low; and how it is arranged.



See our Lady, St. Joseph, the maid, and the Child Jesus after His birth. I will make myself a poor little unworthy slave, and as though present, look upon them, contemplate them, and serve them in their needs with all possible homage and reverence.

See and consider what they are doing, for example, making the journey and laboring that our Lord might be born in extreme poverty, and that after many labors, after hunger, thirst, heat, and cold, after insults and outrages, He might die on the cross, and all this for me (Contemplation on the Nativity, *Exercises*, [112, 114, 116]).

### *A Discussion of Contextual Circumstances*

What Ignatius had read in the *Life of Christ*, the enterprise which he had conceived at Loyola and upon which he had meditated at Manresa, he was about to live with utter intensity.

He had discovered that, to be associated with Christ who had been sent on mission, he had to resemble Christ who had called him "to labor with him, that by following him in suffering he may follow him in glory" (*Exercises*, [95]). And thus he resolved "to remain in Jerusalem, perpetually visiting the holy places. But in addition to this devotion, he also proposed to be of help to souls" (*Autobiog*, 45).

This plan he could not carry out completely. But certainly on the whole of this Holy Land journey, he experienced what he included in his contemplation on the mystery of the Nativity: hunger, thirst, heat, cold, injustice, affronts. He could also make St. Paul's words his own: "endangered by floods, robbers, my own people, the Gentiles; imperiled in the city, in the desert, at sea, by false brothers" (2 Cor. 11:26). But above all he experienced happiness at not being treated any better than his Lord had been.

One has to go to the *Autobiography* to read about all of his adventures on his journey. Here we can only talk about some few which give evidence of Ignatius' desire to form himself to the image of Jesus Christ "poor and humble."

Start with poverty. In his recollections money holds a very large place--not getting it, but rather getting rid of it when he had it. Already out of sorts because he had been told that he had to take his own food on board at Barcelona, Ignatius had very carefully left his last five

silver coins at dockside. He did not want to have any more than "the hope which he placed in God,"

He had heard often enough that it was impossible to go to Jerusalem without money. Whenever somebody forced that money on him, he hurried to give it away to the poor. On his return journey, he almost had to stay right in one port at Cyprus; the owner of the ship refused to take on board someone who had no money at all. But he is a saint, said his friends to the captain. And the reply was simple to one who knew of Compastella: "All right, if he is, all he has to do is make the journey [miraculously] as Saint James did." Finally, a captain willing to put up with him took him on board.

It helped that Ignatius had many friends whom he saw again when he came back to places where he had previously been. At Venice, where it was very cold, one of those friends gave him a piece of cloth which he urged him to wrap as a warmer around his already delicate stomach. He also gave him some silver coins. But then at Ferrara a beggar asked him for money. Ignatius gave him a small coin. As was to be expected, a second beggar did the same. He gave him then a somewhat larger coin. A third beggar came up. He no longer had anything in his hand except large coins to give. And then of course there was a grand rush, with so many beggars pressing around him that in the end all he could say was that they would have to pardon him; he had no more, since he had given away all he had.

For Iñigo as for Francis of Assisi, poverty was not something that induced sadness. Full of the experience of this trip, he would say later to his disciples, "All should love poverty as a mother, and according to the measure of holy discretion, all should, when occasions arise, feel some effects of it" (*Constitutions*, [287]).

Love poverty because Jesus had chosen to be poor. In response to the call of Jesus, Ignatius had prayed:

I protest that it is my earnest desire and my deliberate choice, provided only it is for Thy greater service and praise, to imitate Thee in bearing all wrongs and all abuse and all poverty, both actual and spiritual, should Thy most holy majesty deign to choose and admit me to such a state and way of life (*Exercises*, [98]).

Living like a beggar and looking as if he had the plague, he could count on getting what he asked for, and he did.



But there was a condition in that prayer: "should Thy most holy majesty deign to choose and admit me to such a state and way of life." Humility began with obedience. When the pilgrims were going to start their return journey from Jerusalem, Ignatius went to see the Father Guardian of the Franciscan convent in order to explain to him the details of his proposal to stay in Jerusalem. He did not ask that they put him up or take care of him, but only that one of them would be willing from time to time to hear his confession. The guardian of the house saw no serious objection to this, but he had to ask the provincial. In came the provincial and after some kind words, hard reality. Ignatius could not stay. It was too dangerous. Others had wanted to do the same thing; some of them had died and others had been taken prisoner by the Turks. That made no difference to Ignatius. He was perfectly ready to die or to go to prison. But if he did go to prison, they would be obliged to ransom him: It would cost quite a lot; and they were very poor. So he would have to leave along with the other pilgrims. In that case, Ignatius informed the provincial, he was simply going to stay, no matter what.

The "what" turned out to be pretty serious. The provincial told Ignatius firmly that the Franciscans had from the Holy See the authority to make people leave or to allow people to stay as it seemed good to them. Besides that, they had the power of excommunication against anyone who refused to obey them. And for good measure he could show this obstinate pilgrim the papal documents.

Right then and there Ignatius replied that he had no need to see the documents. Up to that point he had been quite direct with the man who stood there in front of him: When he heard him speak of the Holy See, "since they so judged with the authority conferred on them, he would obey. . . . Since it was not our Lord's will that he remain there in those holy places" (*Autobiog*, 47), he would go on his journeys until he knew clearly by the voice of the Church where the Master wished to lead him. That is the way it would be for another fifteen years.

As to insults borne out of love, he experienced them and he would have more in the future. This time, though, he directly brought one on himself. Right before they left Jerusalem, he stole away from the other pilgrims



without permission in order to see one last time the Mount of Olives and our Lord's footprints. The exasperated friars went after him, and he said that it was as if he saw Christ with him as he was grabbed and brusquely led back to the monastery.

On the return journey, after storm, plague, Turks, and Franciscans, he then had war to contend with. Between Ferrara and Genoa he had to cross the area which separated the French and imperial armies then fighting for control of the Duchy of Milan. This was all part of the long war which Ignatius himself had been in at Pamplona. Obviously he was regarded as a spy, especially when he did not take the road that the soldiers told him to follow. Taken captive by the soldiers of Charles V, he was subjected to the usual kind of treatment for such people, questioning, stripping, searching "down to his shoes and all the parts of his body." The soldiers took him to their captain "who would make him talk."

On the way the pilgrim saw a kind of representation of Christ being led away, but this was not a vision like the others. He was taken through three main streets, and he went without any sadness, but rather with joy and contentment.

The captain thought he was crazy and told the soldiers who had brought him in, "This fellow has no brains. Give him his things and throw him out" (*Autobiog*, 52, 53).

This whole pilgrimage experience helps explain something in the prayer of the *Exercises* to which Ignatius attached much importance. He called it "the composition of place."

When the contemplation or meditation is on something visible, for example, when we contemplate Christ our Lord, the representation will consist in seeing in imagination the material place where the object is that we wish to contemplate. I said the material place, for example, the temple or the mountain where Jesus or His mother is, according to the subject matter of the contemplation (*Exercises*, [47]).

An example will illustrate this insistence. During this pilgrimage Ignatius had seen the holy places on what we would call perhaps a guided tour, and just as fast as such tours usually go. There were so many things to see, things that were true and things that were false but were regarded as true, because legends grew like weeds in these historical places. Ignatius liked to stop, to look at things carefully, to pray. The evening

before he left, the time he managed to escape to Mount Olivet, was a good example.

There was a stone [there] from which our Lord ascended into heaven, and the print of His footstep is still to be seen. It was this he wished to see again. Without a word to anyone, therefore, or without taking a guide (for those who go without a Turk as guide run great risk), he slipped away from the others and went alone to Mount Olivet. The guards did not want to let him in, but he gave them a penknife which he carried with him. After having prayed with deep devotion, he wanted to go to Bethphage, and while he was there, he recalled again that he had not noticed on Mount Olivet in what direction the right foot was turned, or in what direction the left. Returning, he gave his scissors, I think, to the guards for permission to enter (*Autobiog*, 47).

Perhaps this is naïveté. But it might also be a consequence of the fact: For Ignatius, prayer is not simply an intellectual exercise nor an escape from reality. The imagination ought to enter into prayer just as all of the powers of the body and the soul should do. We ought to be present, really present. The "composition of place" is only a "prelude" to contemplation, and contemplation itself of the humanity of Christ is a way to go from the visible to the invisible. And so why not go back to see how the visible, tangible Christ had stood? He would then know in what direction Christ had been looking, so that he himself, Ignatius, in his prayers later on could put himself there in the sight of the Lord and better hear his words, addressed to him.

The Psalmist had said, "If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten!" (Psalm 137:5). Ignatius would not forget Jerusalem.



#### Scene 4. February, 1528: Wisdom and Folly

##### *An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

*The steeples and bell towers crowded upon each other in the Latin quarter. Farther on, beyond the Sainte-Chapelle and the towers of Notre Dame, was the green slope of Montmartre.*

*Since his return from Jerusalem in 1524 Ignatius had been a student. He spent more than two years at Barcelona, sixteen months at the University of Alcalá, some weeks at the University of Salamanca. These stays were full of ups and downs, and the results, at least from an academic point of view, were hardly brilliant. He had come to Paris to start again from square one.*

*Since he had very little money, he stayed at first in a boarding house in the Latin quarter where Spaniards lived. Two months later, without a penny to his name to pay the rent, he was put out on the street and forced to beg, finding lodging with the transient pilgrims at the hospice of Saint-Jacques. Every morning when he got up at sunrise--that was the rule of the hospice--he would hurry all the way to the Seine, cross the Ile de La Cité, climb the hill of Sainte-Geneviève, all out of breath, and still find it impossible to arrive on time for the course at the College of Montaigu where, with the children of Paris, he was learning Latin.*

*Montaigu was the grimmest of places, with an extraordinarily ascetical regime. Rabelais had a few savage things to say about the school. He remarked that the galley slaves of the Moors and the Tartars were better treated and so were the murderers confined to a prison, not to mention even house dogs, than were the poor devils of that college. If he were king of Paris, the devil take him if he would not set fire to the place and to both the principal and the regent who let that kind of inhumanity take place right before their eyes. Even these were mild words compared to other expressions, exceedingly vulgar, imaginative and unprintable, used about Montaigu by the "scholastics" of the day.*

##### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

*The most perfect kind of humility consists in this . . . Whenever the praise and glory of the Divine Majesty would be equally served,*



in order to imitate and be in reality more like Christ our Lord, I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor rather than riches; insults with Christ loaded with them, rather than honors; I desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in this world (Three Kinds of Humility, *Exercises*, [167]).

### *A Discussion of Contextual Circumstances*

"I choose insults with Christ loaded with them. . . ." Just what is the relationship between this desire of Ignatius, so forcefully expressed in the "Third Kind of Humility" of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and an undertaking which was going to consume years of his life, studying, that is becoming part of the "wise and prudent people of this world"? It may be all the more puzzling--or more heroic--in that Ignatius had never suffered more from "the wise and prudent men of this world," churchmen for good measure, than during these years of studies. But there is more than a coincidence between this studying and what at first sight appears so disconcerting, so extravagant, in this "third kind of humility."

First of all, Ignatius took seriously the "human" and all the ordinary circumstances which go to make up its reality. It is a human person who may be called to this almost extravagant "third kind of humility."

Ignatius' father had destined his son for the clergy. He had tried to have a teacher at the castle of Loyola, but like so many generations before and later, the boy had rebelled at Latin grammar. He learned how to read, he loved to write, he sang rather well, and that is all. At the court of Arévalo, in between learning to use knightly arms, he tried to tease out some poetry and to play some musical instruments. All this is not usually the path to scholarship.

At Manresa, God was Iñigo's "schoolmaster." The pious tableaux in reconstructed "caves of Manresa" in Jesuit establishments around the world, wherein Ignatius transcribes the *Spiritual Exercises* as they are dictated to him, may have a point, as long as that point is not taken with a naïve literalism. In the intimacy of the spiritual experiences which took place there at Manresa, the *Spiritual Exercises* began. In the course of his voyage to the Holy Land Ignatius took with him some notebooks about those experiences. There he tried them with one or another person and he looked at the results. The tree was good because the fruits thereof were good.

Why then did he burden himself with the baggage of academe? Why during his return journey from the Holy Land did he decide for studies?

After the pilgrim understood that it was not God's will that he remain in Jerusalem, he kept thinking on what he ought to be doing, and finally felt more inclined to study so as to be able to help souls. He then made up his mind to go to Barcelona (*Autobiog*, 50).

In order the better "to help souls," what means "among all created things" should he now at that moment choose?

It was simply an obvious fact, in the period in which Ignatius lived, that to be a layman did not go along with certain apostolates in the church. For the most part, it seemed that in order to speak about God one had to be a priest, and in order to be priest one had to do the requisite studies. Did Ignatius, then, decide to study in order to become a priest, as is often said?

The facts do not lead to a definitive judgment. At Venice, where he made the decision to study, he was not yet thinking about the priesthood. He had not yet had his run-ins with the theologians which might have convinced him of the necessity to become himself a theologian. Even after he came into contact with them at Alcalá and Salamanca, while he was persuaded that he ought to study, he still did not know what his state of life would be. Would he enter religious life or would he simply live a life in the world? He asked himself that question again at the point at which he left Spain. On March 3, 1528, he wrote to Inés Pascual, his benefactress at Barcelona: "The weather was favorable, and by the grace and goodness of God our Lord I arrived here in the city of Paris in perfect health on the second of February. I will study here until our Lord ordains otherwise (*Letters of St. Ignatius*, trans. Young, page 4). He had already been a student for three years; he still did not say that it was in order to be a priest. Why then the studies?

Since the "illumination" at the River Cardoner, he was sure of the interior insight which he had received concerning the "spiritual life, faith, and knowledge." He believed that the still embryonic *Exercises* were something able to transform individual hearts and even the world. But they would have to be made believable to others as they were for himself. The



Spirit, who had inspired those pages, and the Church, which had to approve of them, could not be in contradiction. But the Church would not, could not, approve the *Exercises* unless they were in conformity with Scripture and tradition. Such may be what first led Ignatius to decide to acquire the learning of the Church.

Ignatius wanted to be a servant of the Church, but not a disincarnate, heavenly Church outside of time. He would serve in these times, in the ambience, the struggles, the idiom of the Church and of the world in which he lived. If the *Exercises* were only a book, they could be handed down just like any other book from generation to generation. But on the contrary, they are first and foremost a dialogue between persons, between the Creator and the creature. As a way into that dialogue, they were also a dialogue between the person who gives the Exercises and the one who is making them. If anything were really to take place in such a dialogue, it could not neglect the living language, the current culture, the civilization of that time which enabled people to communicate among themselves and, like the apostle Paul, to be "a Jew with the Jews and a Greek with the Greeks."

The decision which Ignatius made at Venice looked to such an enterprise. Because it was an apostolic enterprise, Ignatius had the extraordinary courage at the age of thirty-three to sit down with the "kids" in order to learn the rudiments of Latin grammar.

After two years of grammar at Barcelona, 1524-1526, Ignatius enrolled at the University of Alcalá in the faculty of Liberal Arts, wherein the course of philosophy was the principal subject. His apostolic zeal rather overcame, however, his desire for education. Very soon he had four companions; they lived together as a community; he gave the Exercises and taught catechism. The five of them were very quickly known in and around the city. People called them the "gray-robés" because of the common color of their clothes, or the "sack-wearers." They also called them the "alumbrados," and this was far more serious.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, a widespread movement of spiritual renewal had begun to rouse the Church. The "enlightened" or "alumbrados" were part of that renewal. They were not heretics but they did look for God in new ways. Among some of them there was a tendency to



think that, after their discovery of the secret of union with God, the rest was secondary or even useless. That "rest" sometimes included the sacraments, traditional prayer, and, because the sacrament of penance was looked upon unfavorably, the precepts of morality.

So here was a man who himself taught a particular method of union with God. Here were people who were quite singular in their clothing. The inquisitors of Toledo were informed. "They are going to make mincemeat of you and your companions," someone told Ignatius. This was in November, 1526.

The inquisitors did nothing more than inquire, and they left it to Figueroa, the vicar-general, to make the inquiry. The conclusion was reassuring. No error had been found in the teaching of these men or in their way of life. Nonetheless they were to stop distinguishing themselves by this uniform clothing. Two should dye theirs black, one brown; the other could stay gray. Ignatius accepted the sentence, but not without saying, rather brusquely,

"I do not know what use there is in these investigations. Just a few days ago a certain priest refused to give communion to one of us, because he received every week, and they have even made it difficult for me. We should like to know if we have been found in some heresy." "No," answered Figueroa, "for if they had, they would burn you!" "They would burn you too," rejoined the pilgrim, "if they found you in heresy" (*Autobiog*, 59).

Humility can still be blunt.

Ignatius was left alone for several months and then one morning he was taken off to prison. After seventeen days without a word about why he was there, he learned the charge. It was his fault, someone had said, that two women, a mother and a daughter (and the daughter, besides, was "very young and very beautiful"), had fled from Alcalá. In order to clear himself he had to wait for the return of the silly, pious fugitives who had gone off to take part in a pilgrimage, contrary to the advice of Ignatius. Finally he was freed after forty-two days. Since some kind of sentence had to be passed, the Inquisition just added another burden to the preceding sentence. Now he and his friends would have to dress like all the rest of the students, and they would have to stop talking about things of the faith until they had studied for four more years.

Because "apparently they had shut the door to his helping souls" (*Autobiog*, 63), Ignatius resolved to leave Alcalá and go to Salamanca.

The stay at Salamanca was brief. He was there two months, and three weeks of it were spent in prison. In his autobiography Ignatius spends some time in telling about these episodes. The point in question in this trial was the contents of the *Exercises* themselves.

Ten or so days after his arrival in Salamanca, in the middle of July, 1527, he was invited to dinner at the convent of the Dominicans. What took place, as a matter of fact, was a cross-examination. "What do you preach? What things of God do you speak about?"

Then there was the dilemma that was also a trap. "Nobody is able to speak about virtues and vices except in one of two ways: either through education or through the Holy Spirit. If not through education, then it must be through the Holy Spirit." Ignatius kept quiet for a while, sensing the trap, but the Dominican grew impatient. "Well, now that there are so many errors of Erasmus and of so many others who have deceived the world, don't you wish to explain what you say?"

Erasmus and the "alumbrados" were good pegs on which to hang a case. At that very time at Valladolid they were carrying on a theological investigation into that great humanist of the Renaissance. Whether it was the orthodoxy of theologians or the envy of monks, or both, which motivated this investigation, both groups had reason to be less than friendly to Erasmus; he had surely been less than friendly to them, and besides, he was clever at it. Ignatius knew Erasmus' *Enchiridion of the Christian Soldier*. Pedro Ribadeneyra, Ignatius' first biographer, maintained that Ignatius had conceived an instinctive aversion for Erasmus from the fact that in reading that book he had felt his devotion grow cold. The reason may be more complicated than that, because between the *Exercises* and the *Enchiridion* one can find more commonalities than differences. For example, the basic orientation of man to God, the relativity of all created things in relationship to that end, the primacy of interior religion, devotion centered upon Christ, the necessity for discernment. But temperamentally Ignatius and Erasmus were quite different, and the warmth of Ignatius may have found disconcerting the coolness of Erasmus' teachings. Erasmus was not a saint. His



devotion was too cerebral, too balanced for that. In addition, Ignatius' sense of the Church and his respect for tradition would not have found congenial the *Enchiridion*'s distrust of traditional forms of piety such as fasting and pilgrimages, and the flippancy with which the hierarchical Church was commented upon. So, the comment made by the Dominican friar was not really relevant to the situation of Ignatius.

Nonetheless, there he was, again shut up, first of all in this convent, and then for a while, after further interrogation, in prison. He gave the manuscript of the *Exercises* to his judges. They found in it nothing to reprove with respect to the faith, but they wanted to know a little more about its moral theology. At the beginning of the *Exercises* there were some notes to aid people in making an examination of conscience, and the one about telling the differences between a mortal and a venial sin of thought interested them especially.

Ignatius remarked that they should determine "whether the answer were correct or not. If it were not correct, condemn it" (*Autobiog*, 68).

Echoes of Joan of Arc! This kind of reply situates exactly the humility of Ignatius. It involves submission to authority, but it does not in any way involve abdication of what he believed to be true. He would not stop until the *Exercises* were definitively recognized by the Church, "for the glory of God and the salvation of the world." In order to get that recognition he was ready to endure everything and he even rejoiced in it. "I will tell you," he said to one of his judges, "that there are not so many grills and chains in Salamanca that I would not wish for more for the love of God."

For the rest, the inquiries at Alcalá and at Salamanca taught Ignatius a lot. He recognized that for the defense of the *Exercises* he still had further work to do, even at the expense of an immediate apostolate. He also recognized that it was not necessary to single himself out by distinctive clothes in order to aid people. But he also refused to admit the justice of the restrictions placed upon his apostolate. After the reading of the sentence at Salamanca, which reimposed that of Alcalá, he protested that he would do everything the sentence ordered but that he would not accept it because, without condemning him for anything, they closed his mouth so that



he could not help his neighbors insofar as he was able (*Autobiog*, 64-72).

Then, he left his native land.

Since, for all sorts of reasons, his studies had not been carried on with the kind of seriousness that they needed, Ignatius was going to start them all over from the beginning at Paris, despite the stories of the atrocities supposedly committed there because of the hostilities. Some even went "so far as to say that the French roasted Spaniards on spits" (*Autobiog*, 72). This was typical of him in never taking half-measures. Everything went by the board, and he started over anew with the same passion as at Manresa where he had discovered his "new life," and with the same intransigence as at his departure for Jerusalem with "not a penny in my hands," because this was the same love in the service of the same enterprise.

Everything that was secondary was going to be sacrificed. That included self-love; but what a victory over self this was, to sit down once more at the age of thirty-seven on the school benches at Montaigu with the "kids" of Paris to decline nouns and conjugate verbs in Latin!

Ignatius renounced also the consolations which he had experienced in prayer. During his course of studies he was often distracted by spiritual thoughts. He told his teacher this and he promised him "that he would never skip a single one of his classes as long as he was able to find bread and water to live on." Even so, according to one of his friends, he had really to use force on himself in order to study under the schoolmasters of this earth. "His spirit had been accustomed to that better teacher who is the Holy Spirit." This was all the more true in that God took him at his word. His stay in Paris was accompanied by a great spiritual dryness.

He gave up something else too, his desire for a radical poverty. To live in a hospice three kilometers away from the college and not to be able to leave the place until after sunrise when as a matter of fact the courses began exactly at sunrise, that was hardly compatible with serious studies. Besides, simply in order to get by, he looked for a job as one of the house servants of a teacher at the school, as some of the poor students did, imagining that his master was Christ and that the more fortunate students lodging with him were the apostles, whom he would obey with zeal. But he was not able to find such people, and so he had to go looking for money

where he could find it, among the rich Spaniards of Flanders and even as far as London, in order to be able to live with simple decency and to pay the expenses of his studies and even to pay for the special graduation gift which accompanied success in the university.

He did not renounce his apostolate completely, because it was during this time that he met and finally gained, through the *Exercises*, his first permanent companions, Pierre Favre and Francis Xavier. But the farther he advanced in his studies the more time he gave to working at them. At the University "I do not speak to anyone of the things of God, but once the course is finished, the old life will return" (*Autobiog*, 82). Everything in its own time.

All the same, he could not renounce the immediate charity which, in the face of the distress of a neighbor, obliges a person to drop everything else. One day he found out that a Spaniard, who had stolen money from him when he arrived at Paris, was gravely ill at Rouen. To go to his help would be a reasonable thing. But even more, that poor devil there, that was Christ who called; and so a person ought to leap to the call. So Ignatius planned to go barefoot to his aid, without eating or drinking anything for the whole one hundred and twenty kilometers. At that thought, fear gripped his insides from the moment he awoke, and it stayed with him until he left the city at the gate of Saint-Denis in the direction of Argenteuil. But once he passed that village on the heights which overlooked Paris, the fear left him suddenly, and he felt himself so full of energy and joy that he began crying out to the flowers that God was so good (*Autobiog*, 79).

Except for this holy folly and a few others like it, he was a level-headed student.

Ignatius had chosen Paris, but not for reasons of intellectual prestige. Indeed at that time the Spanish universities had nothing for which to envy Paris in that regard. Rather he went there for the "method and program" of Paris. Spanish teaching of the time was based upon the lecture course; Parisian teaching had much of this too, but it also had clear order, practice, repetition, personal relations between the teacher and his students, and help given to the less endowed by those who were better equipped. The "method of Paris" reminds us of the method of the *Spiritual Exercises*.



It is hardly surprising that Ignatius was attracted by it.

It brought clear results. After twenty months of the humanities at Montaigu (Latin and rhetoric), he enrolled at Sainte-Barbe in October, 1529, in the course in "arts," that is, philosophy. He received his bachelor's degree in January, 1532, and his licentiate in March, 1533, thirtieth in rank in a class of more than a hundred. Two years later he received his master of arts degree. From then on he would be called "Master Ignatius." This would be his highest university title because his theological studies with the Dominicans at the Convent of the Jacobins were interrupted that same year by a serious illness. (There seemed to be no grudges held against the Dominicans!)

Just at the point at which he was ready to leave Paris in 1535, he learned that a legal inquiry had again been started in his regard. It was in the period after the "affair of the placards," an inflammatory move by the Zwinglian extremist reformers, angry at Catholics and at Lutherans and at the first movements toward a religious détente. The Inquisition had redoubled its zeal against everything which seemed to it to smack of heresy. So once again, because it dealt with what he held dearest to himself, Ignatius went to work to clear himself of all suspicion. The Inquisitor examined the *Exercises*. He not only cleared them, he praised them. But Ignatius went further and demanded that the laudatory comments of the inquisitor be formally notarized in the presence of witnesses. He was then able to leave for Spain to recover his health and to take care of personal business for himself and his companions. In Paris he left intact the reputation of the *Exercises*.

Through his studies Ignatius had acquired the wisdom "of the wise and the prudent."

He had also gained companions to the "folly" of love. He temporarily left these companions in Paris. He would be with them again soon. For some time now, as a matter of fact, his life story could be told rather in the plural than in the singular.



ACT II. COMPANIONS IN THE LORD IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH

Scene 5. August 15, 1534: Companions

*An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

*This time it is still Paris, but seen from the hill of Montmartre. The seven friends had climbed that hill on this summer morning. Montmartre was covered with vineyards and dotted here and there with windmills. Before one got to the summit he could see the Chapel of the Martyrdom of St. Denis, set apart in a field. It is there, according to legend, that he and his companions were beheaded. (Today that locale is at an ordinary city street address.)*

*Pierre Favre, the only priest in the group of seven companions, celebrated the Mass of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. At the time of Communion, he turned to the others, with the host held in his hand. Then each of them bound himself by a vow of chastity, by a vow of gospel poverty, and by a vow to go on mission to Jerusalem if such a voyage would be possible within the time they had settled on.*

*Once the Mass was over, they went around to another part of the hill, and at the spring of St. Denis, the present site of the Square Girardon, they sat down and spread out a picnic in the shade. Their food they had brought with them, and there were also the grapes of the Montmartre vineyards. It was a scene which cannot fail to evoke some of the details of the last chapter of St. John's Gospel, with the early morning breakfast on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias. They talked, they sat quietly, they laughed. One of them, forty years later, would recall "the joy and happiness" of that day. As the sun went down they went back down the hill to Paris, "praising and blessing God."*

*It was a beautiful summer day. Nothing said so far would seem to describe the start of a great enterprise in common. One has to see a whole history to understand the plaque at the present Chapel of the Martyrdom of St. Denis which recalls that "the Society of Jesus recognizes Ignatius of Loyola for its father and Paris for its mother."*

*But such is the case. On August 15, 1534, seven men bound themselves together to Jesus Christ for such an enterprise. Their names: Ignatius of*

*Loyola, Pierre Favre, Francis Xavier, Alonso Salmerón, Diego Laynez, Nicolás Bobadilla, and Simão Rodrigues.*

*A Related Text from the Exercises*

Consider the address which Christ our Lord makes to all His servants and friends whom He sends on this enterprise, recommending to them to seek to help all, first by attracting them to the highest spiritual poverty, and should it please the Divine Majesty, and should He deign to choose them for it, even to actual poverty. Secondly, they should lead them to a desire for insults and contempt, for from these springs humility.

Hence, there will be three steps: the first, poverty as opposed to riches; the second, insults or contempt as opposed to the honor of this world; the third, humility as opposed to pride (Two Standards, *Exercises*, [146]).

*A Discussion of Contextual Circumstances*

For a long time the Spirit of the Lord had been leading Iñigo to the room in the College of Sainte-Barbe whose threshold he crossed in September, 1529, a few days before classes began and a year and a half after he had arrived in Paris. If Montaigu had been a bastion of conservation, Sainte-Barbe was very hospitable to the new humanism.

Up to now the streets he had walked had seemed blind alleys. When he had tried new experiments, he had learned in one way or another that they were not the will of God. Each time, rather than stubbornly persisting in a particular path, he had with flexibility retraced his steps, and without at all denying the experience he had had, he started out on another path. Often he would retain from those experiences a certain number of points which would later enter into the formation of young Jesuits. He would have them undergo such experiences or "experiments" which were at one and the same time experiments and trials. Just as he had done, so the novice would make the Exercises, would go on pilgrimage, would serve the sick in hospitals before beginning his studies. And through such experiences the novice would become an apprentice at humility.

But through it all, ever since Manresa, Ignatius had dearly desired to share with others what he had lived and what he wished to live for the future. At the beginning, he did so with a certain number of devout women at Manresa and at Barcelona, then with some companions who joined him during



the time of his studies in Spain. When he had left for Paris, he had arranged to meet them later. None of them showed up. At Paris again, he had tried through the embryonic *Exercises* to give substance to his project of companionship. Several students had been attracted to him there earlier in 1529, but with no more permanency than ever before.

Now with his few worldly possessions in hand, the middle-aged schoolboy from Montaigu, who had just registered in the course of "arts," walked into the room whose walls were hard up against a little masonry tower. The two students already lodging in the room had to make a place for him. The two had been together already for four years, and despite the differences in their social condition they had become very good friends. This new fellow was a disturbance. They did not know how true that was!

The first of the two to react sympathetically to Ignatius was Pierre Favre; he had been asked to be the tutor for the older student. Favre had been born in 1506 at Villaret, a village in Savoy, into a peasant family of small means. No matter what, he wished to study, and his parents had to give up the young shepherd that he would have been. And now here he was with his licentiate degree as Ignatius was just starting.

Here are his own words:

That year Iñigo entered the College of Sainte-Barbe and lived in the same room with us, with the intention of following the course in arts. And it was our master who was in charge of this course. How forever blessed was this meeting, arranged by God's providence for my good and for my salvation. After it had been set that I would teach this holy man, it followed that at first we had a rather casual relationship and then I became very close to him, and finally we led a life in common where the two of us had the same room, the same table, the same pocketbook (Favre, *Memoriale*, no. 8).

"The two of us". . . . That is as if the third of them was still outside the group, and such was the case. The third was Francis Xavier, twenty-three years old as was Pierre, while Ignatius at that time was thirty-eight. Their relationship was not immediately very close. The two of them were Spaniards, but as different as a Basque and a Navarrese. Both of them were of the nobility, but they were as far apart as would be one person who renounced all "worldly honors" and another who ran after them almost frantically. As for external appearances, one of them was poorly clothed, ill,



and physically handicapped; all his vitality was in his remarkable personality. The other was a handsome young man, elegant, enjoying a great reputation in the university as a sportsman.

A gentleman before all else, Francis would have to receive the new arrival with the polite smile of a man of high birth who knew how to keep his distance. As for Ignatius, he was certainly attracted to Xavier right from this first meeting. He was dealing with an ambitious man just as he himself was. What possibilities would measure up to their ambitions? That is the question which he would put before Xavier when the time was right. Meanwhile, he did everything possible to gain his friendship through kindnesses and services that he rendered him, especially in a financial way. The manner of life that Francis was leading bore little relationship to the amount of money he had, while Ignatius, who lived on three times nothing, was able to help him.

A little outside the Porte Saint-Jacques the Carthusians had built a beautiful monastery surrounded by a famous cloister garden. Part of it is today the site of the Luxembourg gardens. It was there, at the Carthusians, that on Sunday Ignatius and his friends would assist at Mass and celebrate the Lord's day in quiet contemplation and spiritual conversation.

Those friends now included more than Favre and Xavier. In 1532 another student, Simão Rodrigues, a Portuguese, and in 1533 two young Spaniards, Diego Laynez and Alonso Salmerón, nineteen years old, had one after the other been charmed by Ignatius. The last to enter the group was Nicolás Bobadilla, who arrived at Paris as poor as a churchmouse. By now Francis Xavier had himself finally joined the group.

Spiritual conversation, along with discernment, are two of the distinctive charisms of Ignatius. He possessed that very rare gift of being able to put in words what he had experienced in his prayer. For instance, on that day when he had had at Manresa a "vision" of the Holy Trinity, "he could not stop talking about the most Holy Trinity. He made use of many different comparisons and experienced great joy and consolation" (*Autobiog*, 28). This "spiritual energy," to speak as would Eastern theologians, built up in him to such a flash of insight that the tears flowed from his eyes, but he was then capable later of converting that insight into a language that was intelligible and familiar to others.

Besides, contacts of all sorts, often enough with people who disagreed with him, and the will to "look for God" in every person he spoke with, had given him this feeling for dialogue. It was a dialogue which made progress rather than one which simply went in circles. He had put right at the beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises* a "presupposition" which ought to be operative every time people get together and which everyone ought to have before his or her eyes when participating in meetings, forums and committees, no matter what kind they are:

It is necessary to suppose that every good Christian is more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it as false. If an orthodox construction cannot be put on a proposition, the one who made it should be asked how he understands it. If he is in error, he should be corrected with all kindness. If this does not suffice, all appropriate means should be used to bring him to a correct interpretation, and so defend the proposition from error (*Exercises*, [22]).

It was surely thus in the garden of the Chartreuse and in their day-to-day contacts that Ignatius prepared his friends for the making of the *Spiritual Exercises* which would give birth to the Society of Jesus. He did not give those Exercises right away, especially to these six men. Pierre Favre was the first to make them, in 1534, after four years of spiritual conversation. And Francis was the last to make them, because he was "the hardest block that Ignatius had ever had to deal with." He did not even make the Exercises until after the vows at Montmartre.

By cross-checking through the recollections of the participants we can get at least some idea of the nature of these conversations. They dealt with the Christian life quite simply, a sort of catechism, but one which was lived in the very interior of a person. Through a kind of examination of conscience Ignatius helped to create this daily contact between faith and life, letting "the Creator communicate himself to the faithful soul." This kind of examination is not a bookkeeping of the credits and debits of life, even if some such evaluation might at times be necessary in order to give a flesh-and-blood content to holy desires. Rather, this was a reciprocal movement of thanksgiving for God's gifts and sorrow for sin. Such a movement could open the heart to God's entry and could sensitize the soul to the lightest touch of his love. In that kind of situation the sacraments really



became "sensible signs" of his love. In that kind of situation, too, a person arrived at the critical point where a choice was absolutely unavoidable. It was impossible to serve two masters. . . . It was at such a moment that Ignatius chose to throw a person into the solitude of the Spiritual Exercises.

Already from 1532 on, Pierre Favre had resolved to "follow Ignatius in a poor life." As for Francis Xavier, he came around to the point of wanting to give up his teaching at the College of Dormans-Beauvais in order to give himself completely to prayer. Ignatius slowed both of them down; it was not yet the right moment.

Favre made the Exercises during the winter of 1534 after he had been away for a while at his home in Savoy. He threw himself into the Exercises wholeheartedly, not even wishing during the first week to eat or drink anything, or to kindle a fire in his little room, although in that winter it was so cold that the Seine froze over. An excess, without doubt; but not necessarily contrary to the spirit of the Exercises. Freedom finds its full scope in pushing, at least for a time, to the limits. Thus the meditation on sin brings one to the limit-possibility of imagining an absolute "no." The meditation on hell which is completed by a thanksgiving enables a person to conceive of the possibility of an absolute "yes" in response to the call of Christ.

Pierre was ready for that response when Ignatius told him to stop his fasting and kindle a fire. Then as he gave himself day after day to the contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ, he could finally find the peace which for so long he had sought in vain.

His "election," that central point of the Exercises where a person gives himself without reserve to the will of God for whatever enterprise he asks, confirmed his previous resolution. A man who had previously been all indecision was from now on firm and certain:

Previously, that is, before fixing on the orientation of my life thanks to the help which God gave me through Iñigo, I had always gone on very uncertainly. I had been tossed about by every wind, wanting one day to get married, another day to become a physician, or a lawyer, or a teacher, or a doctor of theology, or a cleric, and sometimes even wishing to become a monk. I had been tossed about at the mercy of these winds,



depending on which at the moment was the strongest. As I said, the Lord delivered me from all of these impulses by the consolations of his Spirit, and he brought me to make the decision to become a priest, in order to be totally devoted to his service. As far as my own merits go, I shall never measure up to such a task, nor to his call, nor to his choice. But gratitude obliges me to respond with all the strength that I have in body and soul (Favre, *Memoriale*, 14)

In these lines taken from Favre's personal journal, someone who is familiar with the *Exercises* will recognize the specific traits of the Ignatian experience: "the call and the choice" of Christ, the attraction to poverty and to giving up honors in order to be with Christ poor and humble, the discernment of spiritual consolation which leads to the decision to follow Christ in a definite state of life, and finally the engagement in an apostolic work. None of this is thought of as a duty; rather it is embraced out of a spirit of gratitude which wants to give back to God the graces one has received from him. It is a movement which recapitulates faithfully the life of Christ, from the engagement he undertook at his incarnation right up to the time at which he returned to his Father.

One by one the six companions underwent the same experience. The result was that nothing from then on was able to separate them. They then decided to see what they might do together as a group. As to their state and style of life there was no problem at all, they would become priests. They would live in poverty at the service of other people. Where? In Jerusalem if that were possible; if not, they would present themselves to the vicar of Christ "so that he could send them where he judged it would be most to the glory of God and the help of souls." When? They would eventually give themselves a year from the time when they met together again in Venice, to look for a chance to take ship for the Holy Land.

With all of this planned out, they made their pilgrimage to Montmartre on the morning of the Feast of the Assumption in 1534 and bound themselves by vow in joy and happiness.

The vow at Montmartre is consistent with the constant theme of all of the *Exercises*, "for the glory of God and the help of souls." This is not simply a dry resolution; it is rather a choice of the affections, conceived in the prayer of a particular community in the Church. Then, just as the

apostles did after the Ascension, they awaited the "confirmation" of that choice. If it did not come, that is, if the voyage to Jerusalem was not realizable, they would turn to the larger community of the universal Church, to the pope. He it was who could give them other missions, in conformity with their plan to make themselves available where the needs were more urgent and the good to be expected was more lasting and more universal. It was not a case of two plans, one the plan of this particular group and the other the plan of the Church, one of them a matter of private initiative and the other a matter of a universal obedience. Rather it was a case of two possibilities within the same service. In both, it was the service of the Church which moved these companions. And it was through a kind of instinct, a "feeling," as Ignatius said.

Thus this little group avoided closing in upon themselves in the fervor of their own companionship. It was as real a danger in those days as it is in ours. Historians highlight the external clashes of Catholics and Protestants at that time, but the deeper struggle was interior to many good and holy people. Many of the more or less public sympathizers with a reform that was obviously needed lived in very fervent groups, and Xavier himself had already been attracted by "these companions who were exteriorly irreproachable." Most such groups saw no other solution to their problems but a break with the institutional Church.

In the face of this phenomenon, Ignatius added a few pages to the *Exercises* at the time when this group of companions came together. They were entitled "Rules to Be Observed to Foster the True Attitude of Mind We Ought to Have in the Church Militant" (*Exercises*, [353-370]). Very much set in the context of their time, these rules in their details are, quite frankly, often anachronistic. But the very fact that they were marked by their own epoch is itself important for us. For Ignatius, the Church is not outside of time; it is made up of real men and women and made by the actions of such men and women as they work with God in history. Indeed, everything which is historical is, as such, contingent. Yesterday it was indulgences and crusades and Friday abstinence which, among other things, Ignatius recommended "for praise" in those Rules. Today it can be the work of the Church for liturgical renewal or for the involvement of Christians in social and civic



concerns. Tomorrow other problems will arise in the measure in which "the shape of this world" will change. But where the Church takes a position on something newly on the scene, it is always a case of cooperation between God and man, with all of the contingency inherent in the latter. That is why the first of those Rules has been and always will be contemporary: "We must put aside all judgment of our own, and keep the mind ever ready and prompt to obey in all things the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, our holy Mother, the hierarchical Church" (*Exercises*, [353]).

It is a matter of the "heart" and of the "readiness" to be at one with and to serve the Church. That Church is the "Spouse" of Christ and therefore in union with him. The Church is "Mother"; we have been nourished by her; we live in relationship to her and to that committed community of men and women who profess their faith in Jesus Christ. There are those, even at the head of the Church, who were not and who are not exempt from reproach. This is true even of persons who are fundamentally good. Ignatius knew plenty about that. He would have had to be blind and deaf not to know it. For example, just the year before, a new pope, Paul III, in one of his first acts, made cardinals of a whole group of men who seriously wanted to reform the Church, but at the same time he gave in to the gross nepotism which was going to mark his whole pontificate.

It is also true that "putting aside all judgment of our own" is not the abdication of intelligence or of conscience. It is not a question of giving up an intelligently critical approach, but rather of making that critique available to those who can supply a remedy if something is awry, rather than simply to the public forum (*Exercises*, [362]). Obviously, how this is done and who might supply such a remedy and what the public forum is may well be different in the twentieth than in the sixteenth century. No one ever said that it was easy to make a right decision about this; there are enough examples to prove that point. "Putting aside all judgment of our own" is, in truth, to give up the pretension that my own personal judgment is self-evidently to be preferred to the judgment of my community, or that of my community to the judgment of the universal Church.

Quite frankly, it is impossible to accept such a detachment from oneself without an attachment, almost visceral or, if one prefers, conjugal,



to the Church. "For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord, the bridegroom, and in his Spouse, the Church, only on Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls" (*Exercises*, [365]).

Obedience to the Church is an offering of our freedom. If it is a servile or an inhuman obedience, it is not at all worth offering. It is, therefore, the same desire of the heart which led those seven companions at Montmartre to offer themselves to Christ in a consecration of their existence in community, and which was going to lead them to Rome to offer themselves to the pope in order to be sent on mission.

On the next morning of August 16, 1534, life went back to normal. Francis Xavier was going to make the Exercises before the beginning of the next school year. At the beginning of October everybody went back to work, Francis to the College of Dormans and the others either to Sainte-Barbe or to the Jacobins. Ignatius threw himself back into the study of theology.

He could stay at that study only for a few months. At the beginning of 1535, Ignatius fell gravely ill. It was a case of kidney stones with terrible accompanying pain. One of the agonizing sessions lasted sixteen or seventeen hours, with fever, vomiting, and cold sweats. The doctors suggested that he go back to Spain to seek recovery in his native air, and the other companions all agreed. He could take advantage of his return home to take care of family affairs for his friends as well as for himself.

They sat down to deliberate together. They decided that, while Ignatius would have to interrupt his studies, the others would go on and finish theirs. They would meet again in Venice at the beginning of 1537. In the meantime Favre took on the responsibility for the group, not as superior (they had none) but as "elder brother." They may also have thought about the possibility of recruiting new companions. Earlier, in January, Ignatius had tried, in vain, to recruit Jerónimo Nadal, who would later become one of the most influential of the early Jesuits. In any case, when they did meet again in Venice they were no longer seven, but eleven. Three Frenchmen joined the group in Paris, Claude Jay, a friend of Pierre, Pasquier Broët, and Jean Codure. For his part Ignatius brought into the group Diego Hoces from Málaga, the "first of the companions to die" (in 1538).

In those years at Paris from 1529 to 1535, so much had been happening

in the world and in the Church which Ignatius wished to serve. . . . Henry VIII pushing for his divorce, the Diet of Augsburg, Charles V crowned emperor, Henry self-proclaimed head of the Church in England, his marriage, the birth of Elizabeth, Machiavelli's *The Prince* published, Calvin joining the Reformation, John Fisher and Thomas More martyred, the two great Catholic powers, France and Spain, again at war with each other under Francis I and Charles V. Ignatius had stayed at his studies.

Now the group dug into their pockets to buy a small mule for Ignatius. As he left, en route to Spain, at the beginning of April, 1535, it was with a last farewell to Paris at the Porte Saint-Jacques--though he looked forward to joining his friends and companions again later on.

## Scene 6. Mid-November, 1537: Together in Separation

### *An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

The "pilgrim"--Ignatius liked to call himself that--was near the end of his journey. It was not Jerusalem, not what he and his companions had so dreamed of right up to the last moment. It was Rome, and the Church in its most visible, most human, most involved form.

The three travelers, Ignatius, Diego Laynez, and Pierre Favre, were about fifteen kilometers from the city. At a crossroads, at a place called La Storta, the "corner" or "bend," there was a little chapel. Ignatius went into the chapel in order to finish the prayer in which he had been engaged, the prayer that a person prays in the Exercises at the crucial moment of the "election": "To pray to our Lady, asking her to obtain for me from her Son and Lord the grace to be received under His standard."

In that chapel at La Storta all of a sudden an absolute certitude swept over Ignatius. "He saw so clearly that God the Father had placed him with His Son, Christ, that his mind could not doubt that God the Father had indeed placed him with His Son."

When he came out of the chapel, Laynez and Favre saw his face still aglow, and they pressed him with questions. Even if he was more adept than others at putting such an experience into words, still, what was he going to say?

Laynez in later years gave a fuller account of this whole experience, and Nadal and others varied some details in recounting it. (Even the first mention of the place, La Storta, comes as late as 1631, but it rests upon a well-established tradition).

As Laynez recounted it in a community exhortation in Rome in 1559, Ignatius said to him that God had imprinted on his heart these words: "I will be propitious to you at Rome." Ignatius, not knowing what these words might mean, said, "I do not know what will become of us at Rome, perhaps we shall be crucified." Then another time he said that he seemed to see Christ with the cross on his shoulder and the Eternal Father nearby who said, "I want you to take this man for your servant," and so Jesus took him and said, "I will that you serve me." And gaining from that vision great devotion to



the name of Jesus, he wanted his congregation to be called The Company of Jesus.

Then they continued their journey on towards the center of the Church militant. Regimini militantis Ecclesiae are the first words of the 1540 papal document which established the Society. But to enter into combat is to suffer.

As they arrived at the outskirts of Rome, Ignatius said to his companions, "I see that the windows are closed."

#### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

In every good choice, as far as depends on us, our intention must be simple. I must consider only the end for which I am created, that is, for the praise of God our Lord and for the salvation of my soul. Hence, whatever I choose must help to this end for which I am created. I must not subject and fit the end to the means, but the means to the end.

It is necessary that all matters of which we wish to make a choice be either indifferent or good in themselves, and such that they are lawful within our Holy Mother, the hierarchical Church, and not bad or opposed to her.

Let him desire and seek nothing except the greater praise and glory of God our Lord as the aim of all he does, for every one must keep in mind that in all that concerns the spiritual life his progress will be in proportion to his surrender of self-love and of his own will and interests (Making a choice of a way of life, [169, 170, 189]).

On arriving in Rome to serve the Church, the companions knew that each individually and the group as a whole would have to be willing to surrender self-love and their own will and interest. To surrender themselves, to move out of themselves and out of their own small community into the universal community of the Church was the dynamism which ruled both their spiritual lives and their apostolic action.

To be convinced of this, it is enough simply to look through the calendar of months since Ignatius had left Paris. The "community," in the sense which implies living together or physical proximity, did not last in a permanent fashion beyond those days in which they lived in the Latin quarter in Paris.

Late April or early May, 1535: Ignatius arrived at Azpeitia, the town of his birth. Despite pressure from his family to stay with them, he lodged at the hospice in the service of the poor. Typically, before leaving in July he tried to institutionalize his works of piety and charity so that they would last. After arranging personal affairs and after that apostolic work, he left in order to meet the parents of his companions and to take care of family affairs for them.

January, 1536: By this time Ignatius was at Venice, where, while waiting for his companions, he tried to continue his studies. He also gave the Exercises there and engaged in the apostolate of "spiritual conversation."

November, 1536: Anticipating the date they had agreed on, the now-nine companions left Paris for Venice. There was great joy in seeing one another again at Venice in January, 1537, but rather than simply stay together, they separated in order to work in the hospitals of the city.

April, 1537: The whole group, except for Ignatius, went to Rome to receive the blessing of the pope in view of their voyage to the Holy Land. Those who were not priests received permission to be ordained. On June 24 they were ordained to the priesthood in Venice. They hoped to celebrate their first Mass at Bethlehem, but by this time Venice had broken off diplomatic relations with the sultan and therefore the pilgrim ships could not leave for the Holy Land.

July, 1537: Rather than simply stay in Venice for the end of the period of waiting which they had foreseen, the companions separated and went two by two to the neighboring cities. Ignatius, Favre, and Laynez went to Vicenza where they lived in the ruins of the abandoned monastery of Vivarolo. They wanted forty days of silence and prayer. Ignatius interrupted it once, to go to Bassano to see Simão Rodrigues when he heard that he was seriously ill there. It was at Vicenza that they gathered in September to celebrate their first Masses, three months after ordination. (Ignatius preferred to wait even longer.) The shanty of Vivarolo "without doors or windows" was as close as they could come to the cave of Bethlehem. During this stay together, after they had reflected upon it and prayed, they took for themselves the name "Company of Jesus."

October, 1537: The possibility of the voyage to the Holy Land receded



even farther into the distance and so again they separated. The field for their apostolate had grown even larger. Two by two they went to Siena, Bologna, Ferrara, Padua. Ignatius, Favre, and Laynez set out for Rome, where, as told here earlier, they stopped in November at the crossroads of La Storta.

Easter, 1538: All of them were together again in Rome, living for a while in what was reputed to be a "haunted house" near the Ponte Sisto. The first direct papal order they received was for Laynez and Favre to teach theology at the Sapienza there in Rome. They had come to a conviction that in some way their companionship had to be compatible with the fact that they were going to live apart from each other. Eventually, they set themselves to deliberate on how they were going to solve this problem of union and dispersion.

November, 1538: The whole group "offered themselves" to the pope for any mission anywhere in the world, in accord with what they had pledged at Montmartre. This offering was not a religious-order vow and it preceded any proposal to form a religious order.

In the meantime, from the day that they arrived in Rome their daylight hours had been filled with apostolic work. It was only at night that they were able to get together for any length of time for discussion.

Spring and summer, 1539: Their deliberations, started at the beginning of Lent in 1539 and carried on evening after evening, were not completed until June 24 of that same year. Here, step by step, is the account of what happened.

Some of us were French, others Spanish, Savoyards, or Portuguese. After meeting for many sessions, there was a cleavage of sentiments and opinions about our situation. While we all had one mind and heart in seeking God's gracious and perfect will according to the scope of our vocation; nevertheless, regarding the more readily effective and more fruitful ways of achieving God's will for ourselves and others, we held diverse views. No one ought to wonder that this diversity of views should be found among us, spiritually infirm and feeble men; even the apostles themselves, princes and pillars of the most holy Church, sometimes thought in opposing ways and handed down in writing their conflicting judgments. So also did many other very perfect men with whom we cannot be remotely compared.

Since we did hold different judgments, we were eagerly on the watch to discover some unobstructed way along which we might advance together and all of us offer ourselves as a holocaust



to our God, in whose praise, honor, and glory we would yield our all. At last we made a decision. In full agreement we settled on this, that we would give ourselves to prayer, Masses, and meditations more fervently than usual and, after doing our very best, we would for the rest cast all our concerns on the Lord, hoping in him. . . .

We began, therefore, to expend every human effort. We proposed to ourselves some questions worthy of careful consideration and forethought at this opportune time. Throughout the day, we were accustomed to ponder and meditate on these and to prayerfully search into them. At night each one shared with the group what he judged to be more appropriate and helpful, with the intention that all with one mind would embrace the truer way of thinking, tested and commended by the more powerful reasons and by majority vote (*Deliberatio*, [1-2], translation of J. Toner, S.J., in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, VI, no. 4 (June, 1974), pp. 185-187).

Neither in this preamble to the *Deliberation* nor in the rest of the document does the name of Ignatius figure. It is the group as such which is engaged in this affair. Their close friendship had not at all obliterated the diversity of temperaments and nationalities, but their common project was clear. How then, in accord with the Exercises, were they going to order means to that end? Each would place himself through prayer in the position of being called. But just to see themselves summoned by God did not absolve them from the very human and practical task of establishing an agenda and deciding on a working method. This they did, and then they entered right into their discussions.

The first question which they posed for themselves in the perspective of their being scattered to a variety of places seems to have been settled without too much difficulty.

Would it or would it not be more advantageous for our purpose to be so joined and bound together in one body that no physical distance, no matter how great, would separate us?

In the end we established the affirmative side of the question, that is, that in as much as our most kind and affectionate Lord had deigned to gather us together and unite us, men so spiritually weak and from such diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds, we ought not split apart what God has gathered and united; on the contrary, we ought day by day to strengthen and stabilize our union, rendering ourselves one body with special concern for each other, in order to effect the greater spiritual good of our fellow men. For united spiritual strength is more robust and brave in any arduous enterprise than it would be if segmented (*Deliberatio*, [3]).

But how would they bring about such a corporate body? They wanted such a unified group in view of the results which it would bring with it. What organic bond would link these men who were going to be physically separated? And if, as they hoped, this body would grow and develop, what would guarantee its unity and its cohesion?

All of us had already pronounced a vow of perpetual chastity and a vow of poverty before the most reverend legate of the pope when we were working among the Venetians. The question now was this: would it be advantageous to pronounce a third vow, namely, of obedience to someone from among us, in order that we might more sincerely and with greater praise and merit be able to fulfill the will of God in all details of our lives as well as in carrying out the authoritative decision of the pope, to whom we have most willingly offered our all, will, intellect, strength, and the like? (*Deliberatio*, [4]).

Here now arises the question of obedience in the interior of this new organization. The companions had already decided to obey the pope. That was fundamental; they did not in any way wish to go back on that. But this obedience was itself a centrifugal force, because obedience to the pope was going to send them out on mission, away from each other. They were not ignorant of the great monastic tradition of the virtue of obedience in imitation of Christ, but at this point and for them in their position, obedience of all of them to one of them appeared under a new aspect. It seemed to them that it might be a means of putting into effect their proposal for union in and through their separation. Unfortunately, each time that they came down to putting such a grand theory into humble specifics, difficulties immediately arose and, quite frankly, they found themselves in disagreement. So they decided to stop short their deliberation and look again at their methods.

When we had persisted in prayer and thought for many days without hitting upon any satisfactory resolution of our uncertainty, we put our hope in the Lord and started to cast about for better ways of working out such a resolution (*Deliberatio*, [5]).

This pause is significant. They were blocked; they wanted to get back on track again; they were at the point of experiencing together what the *Exercises* called "desolation." In such a case Ignatius counseled, "We must never change our former resolutions"; therefore the deliberation would go on. "It will be very advantageous to intensify our activity against the desolation. We can insist more upon prayer, upon meditation, and on much



examination of ourselves" (*Exercises*, [319]). In such a spirit, then, after having looked at several hypotheses, they made three decisions:

This was to propose the following spiritual preparations for each and every member of the whole group. The first preparation: Each would ready himself beforehand, would take time for prayer, Masses, and meditation in order to strive for joy and peace in the Holy Spirit regarding obedience, laboring as much as he could to have a predilection for obeying rather than commanding, when the consequent glory of God and the praise of his majesty would be equal. The second preparation: None of the companions could communicate with any other about this matter at issue or inquire about his reasoning on it. The point of this preparation was to prevent anyone from being persuaded by another and, therefore, biased more toward obedience [by vow to one of their own number] or the contrary. This way each would desire as more advantageous only what he derived from his own prayer and meditation. The third preparation: Each one would think of himself as a stranger to our group who would have no expectation of joining it. Thinking this way he would escape being carried by his emotions more to one opinion and judgment; rather, as if a stranger, he would speak his thought to the group about having or not having obedience, would by his judgment confirm and recommend what he believed would be for God's greater service and would more secure the Company's lasting preservation (*Deliberatio*, [6]).

It is obvious what relevance such an example of trying to attain a position of spiritual freedom has for us today as we try in the Society to engage in communitarian discernment and action.

Their deliberation immediately took on life again. First, they went through the whole list of objections to a vow of obedience. Would not such a vow run contrary to their fundamental proposal? The reasons which they gave make obvious this disquietude. Quite simply, to put together the three vows, poverty, chastity, and obedience, would put the companions in a category already quite well defined, that of "religious." Two problems stared them in the face. Members of religious orders, in general, at this period had a very bad reputation among the faithful. Secondly, because of such assimilation to religious, the companions risked being submitted to that part of the common law of the Church which dealt with religious orders, with its concomitant obligations. For example, there was the obligation of stable residence in convents or religious houses and of chanting the divine office in choir. Such provisions seemed to them incompatible with an enterprise in which they proposed to "go everywhere in the world."



The positive reasons for such a vow reflected the same preoccupation with their proposed mission. Obedience was necessary in order to have someone responsible for coordinating and putting into effect their apostolic missions. It was equally indispensable in order to preserve, to keep cohesive, and to develop this body of men. Only in third place do reasons of an ascetical order show up.

These companions and friends had reflected in depth on the dialectic of union and dispersion. This deliberation on obedience they called the "most difficult" of the whole process. But their desire for union on mission brought them to the conclusion "not by a majority of votes but with an absolute unanimity that it was for them very preferable and very necessary to give obedience to one among them."

There were other questions yet to be settled, but the essential point was now determined. So during the month of May Ignatius was asked by the others to take on the responsibility of drawing up and submitting to the companions a "Formula of the Institute," a sort of charter which would be presented to the pope for his approval.

Everything in this Formula, and in the *Constitutions* which would be a further development of the Formula, is put together around the two terms of their enterprise, union for the sake of dispersion, or the "body" for the "mission." Priority was given to the mission. Consecrated to Jesus, the companions thought of themselves as messengers or envoys. Because it was a question of dealing with quite specific missions, historically and locally determined according to the needs of the present time in the universal Church, for that reason it was from the vicar of Jesus Christ that they would receive those missions.

Since one's being sent on a mission of His Holiness will be treated first, as being most important, it should be observed that the vow which the Society made to obey him as the supreme vicar of Christ without any excuse, meant that the members were to go to any place whatsoever where he judges it expedient to send them for the greater glory of God and the good of souls, whether among the faithful or the infidels. The Society did not mean any particular place, but rather that it was to be distributed into diverse regions and places throughout the world, and it desired to proceed more correctly in this matter by leaving the distribution of its members to the sovereign pontiff (*Constitutions*, [603]).

This relationship to the pope in view of the missions they were to undertake would, for the future, be made explicit for Jesuits by a special vow of obedience. It was a vow taken on in function of the mobility appropriate, indeed necessary, to someone engaged in an apostolic venture. These men would attempt to live the poverty of the gospel and would refuse formal dignities and honors except on the express order of the pope. So also, in order to assure greater freedom of movement they would not be bound by ritual penances, nor by the celebration of the Divine Office in choir as monks did.

As for the union among the members of this body, their cohesion and their apostolic élan, the "general superior" would be primarily responsible for it. ("General" here had the sense of universal; it did not refer at all to a military hierarchy.) Elected by his companions, he would watch over the preservation of the original decisions, over the formation of the young Jesuits who were the future of the group, and over the process of discernment and the ultimate decision about who might be the person best fitted to carry out this or that mission. Finally, the general superior would watch over the union among the companions who were spread out all over the world. Each of them would be in relationship with him or with his delegate in the closest possible manner. All of this was to the end that their mutual knowledge, understanding, respect, and love would be as human and as profound as possible, and so that this group of men could make actual in their lives the ideal of "the company of Jesus, a company of love."

Finally this work came to an end, and in the last paragraph of the *Deliberation* they summed up how they had done it.

In all our deliberations over the questions just spoken of and others, we followed the order of discussion and the procedure described above, always giving attention to both sides of every question. Our efforts lasted for almost three months, from the middle of Lent until the feast of John the Baptist. On that day, but not without long vigils, much prayer, and labor of mind and body preceding deliberation and decision, all our business was completed and terminated in a spirit of gladness and harmony (*Deliberatio*, [9]).

The euphoria of that moment did not last very long. Pope Paul III, influenced by the great Cardinal Contarini, received favorably the text of this Formula. (Contarini in 1537 had sent to the pope a blunt report on the need for reform in the Church. It had been prepared by a special commission and



it did not mince words. Though intended to be secret, through a series of leaks it got into the hands of the Protestants.) Formal papal approval of the companions' plan still had to be put in due and legal form after the document and its ideas had been carefully scrutinized. So the Formula went its rounds through the papal offices and it was blocked en route. After Alcalá, Salamanca, Paris, and Venice, it would itself be surprising if Ignatius could at all have been surprised at such a situation. From the time of their arrival in Rome, the companions had been hatefully calumniated; they had earlier had to ask for a specific audience with the pope in order to put an end to the intrigues against them, some brought on by certain "Lutheranizing" preachers.

Now in turn it was the Formula of the Institute that people said was suspect of the tinge of Lutheranism. This was because of certain of the newer points which distinguished the companions from other religious. The Master of the Sacred Palace, the pope's own official theologian, sniffed out the smell of heresy or at least of danger to orthodoxy. Not surprised at the situation, but not resigned to it either, Ignatius asked the group to pray with all the more insistence. Not one to devalue human help too, he also went about soliciting support from the quite powerful friends that he had, asking them to urge favorable considerations by the papal curia. He changed the text slightly to meet some of the objections. It took more than another year before the papal document *Regimini militantis Ecclesiae* was finally drawn up, approved, and signed by Paul III.

At this signature the Society of Jesus officially came into being, September 27, 1540.

## Scene 7. April 22, 1541: Growth

### *An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

Rome again--as it was to continue to be for Ignatius. In the Basilica of Saint Paul outside the Walls, in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, six of the companions--the others have already gone on mission--were to make the first solemn profession of vows in the Society of Jesus. Ignatius was celebrant of the Mass (as Favre had been seven years before at Montmartre). At Communion time, he turned toward them with the host held in his hands, and each in turn made his offering:

"I [Jean Codure, Diego Laynez, Alonso Salmerón, Pasquier Broët, Claude Jay] promise to Almighty God--in the presence of the Virgin, His mother, and the whole heavenly court and in the presence of the Company--and to you, Ignatius Loyola, who act in the place of God, perpetual poverty, chastity, and obedience according to the manner of life defined in the founding document of the Company of Jesus and in the Constitutions which have been promulgated or which will be promulgated. Besides I promise to obey especially the sovereign pontiff on the subject of missions mentioned in that document. I promise, in addition, obedience with regard to the instruction of children in the elements of the faith according to the same document and the Constitutions."

After the Mass they embraced in joy, and Ignatius recalled later that there followed "a great calm which lasted and went on growing to the praise of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Only two days before, on April 20, he had finally accepted the unanimous election on the part of his companions, who, on April 9, had chosen him for superior general. Before leaving for Portugal Francis Xavier and Simão Rodrigues had left behind their written ballots, and Pierre Favre had sent his from Germany. But Ignatius had asked for some time to reflect on his election.

Earlier, after his ordination, he had waited eighteen months before celebrating his first Mass. He had done so on December 25, 1538, at the church of St. Mary Major, where there was one of the first reproductions of the crib of Bethlehem. Now in 1541 his confessor, a Franciscan, told him



*it would be wrong to wait or to refuse the election by his brethren. He was increasingly sure now that Rome would for all the future be his "Holy Land."*

*Today they were outside the walls of Rome at St. Paul's in order to put a solemn seal on the unity of the companions, all of whom were soon going to leave or who had already left the city of Rome. But that evening Ignatius was going to go back inside those walls, and he would hardly leave again. He would stay there in Rome in order to maintain in unity and in cohesion the body of companions which was going to grow and grow in the coming years.*

#### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me (Contemplation to Attain the Love of God, *Exercises*, [234]).

#### *A Discussion of Contextual Circumstances*

The house was an old stone building with the one advantage of being right in the center of Rome, near the Capitol and near the papal residence, right across the street from a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Way (Santa Maria della Strada). Today the international scholasticate of the Society in that same location occupies the building which was for more than two centuries the general's curia, and the church of Gesù stands right next door. Across the street is the headquarters of the Christian Democratic party, around the corner the Piazza Venezia and the grandiose "wedding-cake" monument to Victor Emmanuel, whose government forced the Jesuits out of Rome a century ago.

Soon the Society would be given responsibility for the parish and would be able to build on the empty land round about. Then Ignatius would move into the priest's residence there, into three small low-ceilinged rooms. From then on, that was going to be his home. Those rooms are still preserved there.

His work was principally the writing of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. They remained yet unfinished at his death. They were still in the process of formulation in order constantly to take account of the comments of his companions and of their experiences.

Like the Exercises and like all the decisions Ignatius had made from day to day, the Constitutions had been conceived in prayer. We have direct evidence of this, thanks to a few of Ignatius' handwritten notes which managed to escape destruction and which received the name *Spiritual Diary* or *Journal*. The *Journal*, practically unknown until the end of the last century, allows us an experience which his friends never directly had while he was alive.

It was not that they had not tried to learn more about Ignatius' prayer. Laynez in particular had tried to do so. He set down in his notes some of what he observed.

At night he [Ignatius] would go up on the roof of the house, with the sky there up above him. He would sit there quietly, absolutely quietly. He would take his hat off and look up for a long time at the sky. Then he would fall on his knees, bowing profoundly to God. Then he would sit on a little bench because the weakness of his body did not allow him to take any other position. He would stay there bareheaded and without moving. And the tears would begin to flow down his cheeks like a stream, but so quietly and so gently that you heard not a sob nor a sigh nor the least possible movement of his body (cited in Ribadeneyra, *Vita Ignatii Loyolae*, in *FN*, IV, 746-749).

What Laynez saw in practice had already been set down in the *Exercises*: the choice of a favorable place for prayer, the reverential gesture which marks its beginning, the choice of a posture which would best help a person find what he was looking for, the tranquillity and the physical quiet conducive to maintaining attention. But Laynez' description shows how gestures and bodily postures can go well beyond being mere recipes for prayer, and are far from being burdens to prayer which derogate from its spontaneity. Rather they can and should simply be natural helps toward getting in touch with our own personality and with our growing awareness of the goodness and majesty of God.

Ignatius also recommended that one prepare for the time of prayer by thinking about it the preceding night, before one went to bed, and in the morning when one awoke. Right up until the last years of his life, he used to read the text of the Mass for the next day, and "he prepared for everything." He himself noted in his Diary what his first thought was on awakening and what his reflections were before he began his prayer. For example,



"I wanted to get ready for Mass, but doubted to whom and how to commend myself first. In this doubt, I knelt down, wondering how I should begin" (*Spiritual Diary*, [32], in *Obras completas* . . . , and page 8 in *Spiritual Journal*, translated by Young).

From the point of view of the person who is entering into prayer, what is important is to begin. Ignatius insisted especially on this point. The choice of place, of time, of posture, the offering of oneself, the way of praying, the relationship between prayer and breathing, all are important. But more important, he insisted, was that the person praying begin with something that appealed to him or her, that one involve the senses and the imagination, and that one propose a goal to be attained. We cannot start except from where we are. We cannot pray except the way we are. To read some literature on the spiritual life, one might sometimes think that the old hymn verse, "I'll fly to the heart of my God," were literally true with a single sweep of the wings. Even at the end of his life Ignatius, a man already so familiar with the Trinity, would go through "mediators," as he called them, and he recommended that others do so too. For example, "A colloquy should be addressed to our Lady, asking her to obtain for me from her Son. . . . To ask her Son to obtain the same favors for me from the Father" (*Exercises*, [147]).

What we need, if we are both humble and realistic, is to start with things evident to our senses; to see, to imagine, to walk down familiar roads, to start with texts which tell a story of the things that have happened. To be carried beyond that is no longer directly our affair; that is what God does with us. When Ignatius spoke about what happened to him under the action of God, what God was doing to him, he used with reference to himself "recipient" terms, for example, to experience, to receive, to be invaded by, to be taken up by, to be seized by God. The other side of this attitude of receptivity was the active offering of one's work to God and asking for His activity. An example exists in the fashioning of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Nowhere else perhaps than in the *Journal* of Ignatius can one better grasp the reciprocal integration of prayer and work in this man.

His method of procedure, when he was drawing up the Constitutions, was to say Mass every day, and to lay the point he was treating

before God, and to pray over it. He always made his prayer and said his Mass with tears.

I wanted to see all the papers dealing with the Constitutions, and I asked him to let me see them for a moment. But he would not (*Autobiog*, 101).

On that note Luis Gonçalves da Câmara finished his writing of Ignatius' "autobiography." More fortunate than he, we possess some of those "papers" that he spoke of. At this period, for example, Ignatius was reflecting on what kind of poverty the Society would be living. More precisely, he was asking if the churches of the Society could possess fixed revenues. The period covered by the *Spiritual Diary* or *Journal* went from February 2, 1544, to February 27, 1545. But the period of "election" lasted only the first forty days, February 2 to March 12, 1544. In accord with the classical method, he listed on a piece of paper the reasons for and against this or that way of living out poverty. Personally he was leaning toward a radical poverty. But did that inclination come from God or was it only his own? In order to find out he wanted to obtain from God a "confirmation." This is the key word of the *Journal* at this period.

I sat down, considering, as it were in general, whether I should have complete or partial revenue, or nothing at all, and I lost all desire to see any reasons. At this moment other lights came to me, namely, how the Son first sent the Apostles to preach in poverty, and afterwards the Holy Spirit, giving His Spirit and the gift of tongues, confirmed them, and thus the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit, all Three Persons confirmed this mission . . . . I made the offering of perfect poverty, holding it as ratified and valid (*Journal*, [15-16], Young trans., p. 4).

But this global confirmation by the Holy Trinity which he looked for so ardently suddenly seemed again to be in question, through his fault, as he said, because he neglected to pray to the Three Persons. He passed through "a period of heaviness and aridity in all spiritual things" as if he were "in exile." He prayed ardently:

"Eternal Father, confirm me. Eternal Son, confirm me. Eternal Spirit, confirm me; Holy Trinity, confirm me; my only God, confirm me!" I said this with great earnestness and with much devotion and tears, very often repeated and very interiorly felt. Saying once, "Eternal Father, will you not confirm me?" understanding that He had, and the same to the Son and to the Holy Spirit (*Journal*, [48], Young trans., pp. 11-12).



On February 23 came the confirmation which he had been waiting for.

The thought of Jesus occurring to me, I felt a movement to follow him, it seemed to me interiorly, since He was the head of the Society, a greater argument to proceed in complete poverty than all the other human reasons, although I thought that all the reasons of the past elections tended towards the same decision. . . . Thinking that the appearance of Jesus was in some way from the Most Holy Trinity, I recalled the day when the Father placed me with the Son (*Journal*, [66-67], Young trans., pp. 15-16; that last sentence in the manuscript is in brackets).

On the following days he recognized that in his impatience he had perhaps not been faithful to letting himself be guided by God. Had his prayer indicated an increased "respect" for God and a greater indifference on his part? On March 12, he gave up looking for other "signs." "The point at issue," Maurice Giuliani says in the introduction to the French edition of the *Journal*, "was his leaning toward total poverty. But in looking for the will of God in this matter Ignatius found even more, the secret of interior poverty."

This disposability, this freedom, the result of the integration of prayer and reflection, translated itself into a certain flexibility which seems to characterize the Constitutions. In fashioning those Constitutions Ignatius had not wanted simply to transcribe for history a particular set of experiences that he had at one time undergone. He also had to be thinking of the future. He was, after all, living through the midst of the upheavals of the sixteenth century. And he had to know that history would have in store other such upheavals for the Society. Besides, he hoped and prayed that the body of the Society would grow. In such a context, the question was posed: What could serve as a principle sufficiently firm that neither the growth in members nor the passage of time would soften the first resolutions that they had taken, and yet a principle sufficiently flexible to adapt itself to the laws of growth and to historical change?

After much thought, Ignatius came up with an original term to express this principle, *discreta charidad*. Any translation presents problems, especially with the word *discreta*. Its English cognate, "discretion," can summon up so much that it does *not* mean for Ignatius. It is not meant to imply timidity or reserve or a niggling prudence or the happy medium or the golden mean or being an operator or diplomatic precautions. What Ignatius

wanted to highlight in this expression is the indissoluble linking of love (*charidad*) and discernment (*discreta*).

Love, for Ignatius, was a stream which found its source in the Trinity and returned to the Trinity. For any person who loves, love involves a sense of limitlessness whereby none of our desires is ever totally fulfilled: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in God." It is for the apostle Paul the conviction of having done nothing up to the present and of always wishing to do "more." Finally love brings with it the type of spiritual awareness which makes it possible to "find God in all things."

Discernment, for Ignatius, is an embodiment of love. It is an awareness of the limits within us, an awareness which forces us to choose the better service from among numerous possibilities and which expresses limitless divine love in a precise human action. It is the humble searching for what God wants "here and now."

Love without discernment is only a dream figment which does not use the ordinary paths which humankind must take and which loses itself in an infinity without any real content. On the other hand, discernment without love is dry-as-dust research which is incapable of grasping the finality of human action and is swallowed up in activism.

Only the combination "love and discernment," perfectly lived in Jesus Christ, makes possible the synthesis of contemplation and action, of desire and accomplishment, of the universal and the particular. Such is one of the key principles which underlay the whole writing of the Constitutions.

Can the response to the appeals that love makes "for the greater glory of God" always beyond our range, and "for the greater good of humankind" encountered in every sort of circumstance, can this response do without rule? Ignatius wrote that "the interior law which the Holy Spirit is accustomed to imprint on our hearts" suffices, but that Constitutions are necessary in order to propose the criteria for discernment which would permit the Society and each of its members to "better advance in the way of service" (*Constitutions*, [134]).

In those Constitutions, great desires and large-minded plans are put into realistic prescriptions for their fulfillment. A few examples can make this clear. First, those who have been admitted to the Society are destined



"to range through the different parts of the world" in order to aid humankind. But nonetheless, they will begin by long years of studies, because what is wanted is that they turn out to be not simply happy wanderers; not just men who, because they feel deeply about God and could make others feel so, think they are saying something serious about Him; but men who are as competent as possible, capable of confronting with some depth every discipline and every culture (*Constitutions*, Part IV).

A second example: When they have been fully incorporated into the body of the Society, promising to obey the pope in order to be totally available for missions in the one universal Church, they promise also to have a particular care for the education of young people in the faith. We all need to remember that, even when we are engaged in the most renowned ministries, the glory of God is pursued in the most humble of services (*Constitutions*, Parts V and VI).

Third, regarding the choice of missions and of those who are to be sent on such missions, he who makes the decisions will be guided by the criterion of love: "A good is more divine in proportion as it is more universal." Just as much will he be guided by criteria of practicality: the "more urgent" task, the "longer lasting" work. On the other hand, he who is sent out on a task ought himself to discern on site the most appropriate means for the accomplishment of his mission. He is not simply a messenger boy or pure executant (*Constitutions*, Part VII).

A last example: Separated from each other by their love for the Lord and His work, the companions are also united by love for each other. Obedience will maintain them in unity. Prayer will bring them together in Christ. But while living these central all-embracing virtues which so contribute to unity, they should also remember and use such ordinary specific and humble means as letter writing, the circulation of news about each other, hospitality, periodic reunions. If the general is responsible for the unity of the whole Society less by centralization than by fellowship, at the same time each member, where he is with the means available to him, takes charge of the preservation and development of the body of the Society (*Constitutions*, Parts VIII, IX, and X).

Such was Ignatius, "impatient of limits," in the words of Gaston Fessard,

but capable of passing the last sixteen years of his life within the four walls of a small room. A Jesuit of the seventeenth century, Gabriel Hevenesi, said all of this in a lapidary formula, "Not to be intimidated even by the overwhelmingly vast, yet to find one's place even in the petty detail, that is a gift of God." The "overwhelmingly vast" is the task to be done--but it is also God's love for us as we do it. The "petty detail" is the means to be taken--but it is also gospel discernment as we choose it in its proper place.

On March 30, 1544, Ignatius noted in his *Journal*:

I thought [during prayer] that humility, reverence and respect should not be fearful but loving, and this was so firmly established in my mind that I said confidently: "Give me a loving humility" . . . receiving fresh consolations in these words. I also resisted tears to turn my attention to this loving humility.

Later in the day, I had much joy in remembering this, and I thought that I should not stop there, but that the same would be true later of creatures, that is, loving humility (*Journal*, [178-179], Young trans., p. 39).

*Humildad amorosa*, a "loving humility." In inverse terms this may say the same thing as *discreta charidad*. Before his Creator and Lord, Ignatius experienced himself as totally small; drawn by God Himself, he experienced himself caught up in the boundless love of the Trinity. Such also, he prayed would be "this least Society of Jesus" (*Constitutions*, [134]).



Scene 8. June 28, 1553: The Courage to Try

*An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

*Excerpts from a letter of Ignatius to Francis Xavier*

*My dear, dear brother in our Lord,*

*We received here your letter of January 28, 1552, later than usual. . . . And it is for that reason that you will not be receiving this reply as quickly as I would have wished. We learned that through your ministry God our Lord has opened doors to the preaching of his gospel and to the conversion of the pagans in Japan and China. We are marvelously consoled at this in the Divine Majesty. We hope that he will be known and glorified every day among the nations who help his flock to grow in space and time with the divine favor. . . .*

*[Nonetheless], considering the greater service of God our Lord and the help to be brought to souls in those countries which depend upon Portugal, I have decided to ask you, in the name of holy obedience, to choose among so many roads the one which leads to Portugal, at the first occasion for a favorable voyage. In order that there where you are you can make this decision understandable to those who would very dearly like to keep you for the good of the Indies, I will tell you the reasons which led me to make it. Those reasons, too, deal with the good of the Indies.*

*First of all, you know how important for the preservation and growth of Christianity in the Indies, in Guinea, and in Brazil are the favorable laws which the king of Portugal can enact. . . . Besides, it is of great importance that the Apostolic See have reliable and complete information about questions dealing with the Indies from someone who has it. . . . You also know how important it is for the good of the Indies that the men who are sent there be fit for the tasks which are proposed in those countries or in other places. Your coming to Portugal and Rome will be most useful in this matter. . . . Apart from these previous reasons, I think that you will spur on the king on the question of Ethiopia. How many years has it been that he was going to do something for Ethiopia. And never yet have we seen it realized. It is the same case for the Congo and Brazil. . . .*

*I commend myself with all my heart to your prayers. And I ask the divine and sovereign goodness to be good enough to give to all of us the*

*fullness of his grace so that we will always understand his most holy will.*

*Yours totally in our Lord,*

*Ignatius*

### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

It is characteristic of the good spirit, however, to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and peace. This He does by making all easy, by removing all obstacles so that the soul goes forward in doing good (Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, *Exercises*, [315]).

### *A Discussion of Contextual Circumstances*

Francis Xavier never received the letter of June 28, 1553, reproduced at the beginning of this chapter and found on page 298 of *Letters of St. Ignatius* as translated by Young. He had died on December 2, 1552, on the island of Sancian at the gates of China. The news did not get to Rome until three years later.

One could imagine Francis reading familiarly over the shoulder of his companion while he was writing. Ignatius had ended another letter in the following way, "Yours completely, without ever being able to forget you." And Francis had responded, "Those words, I read them with tears in my eyes. And with tears I write these words. Filled with memories of times gone by, I think of the great love which you have and which you have always had for me. . . ."

"The memories of times gone by"--those were the years in which they had been companions, up to the day in the spring of 1540 when Ignatius told Francis that the king of Portugal had asked for men for the Indies, and that this was the job for him. Xavier had replied with utter simplicity that there he was, ready to go.

And go he did, with equal simplicity, from Rome to Lisbon and then around the Cape of Good Hope to India, the Moluccas, Japan, the gates of China, almost sixty thousand miles in all, twelve years away, never to return.

During all these years, to Ignatius' desk at Santa Maria della Strada in Rome came requests for missionary help in Asia, in Africa, in America.



The pope wanted theologians for the council which was just about to open at Trent. Men were needed for the flash points of the Reformation, Germany, France, Ireland. Everybody was asking for colleges, and the Jesuits found that in response to the insistence of the Church itself they were becoming teachers. . . . How was this new society to respond to all of this?

Even more than the desire to see his friend once again, this question explains the letter of June, 1553, sent out of concern for the greater good. Francis had to be brought back to the center of decision. If he were to be taken away from Asia, it would be for the sake of Asia itself. But it would also be for Guinea, Brazil, the Congo, Ethiopia. . . . His persuasive abilities could stimulate the king of Portugal. His apostolic ardor would encourage vocations. His experience would permit the discernment of what apostolic means were most suitable. His joy and vivacity would do the rest.

One of the letters of Francis had already made a great stir in Rome, in Portugal, and in Paris. Dated from Cochin, January 15, 1544, it was spread far and wide in handwritten copies. Among its more vivid passages were the following:

Many times I am seized with the thought of going to the schools of your lands and there cry out like a man who has lost his mind, and especially at the University of Paris, telling those in the Sorbonne who have a greater regard for learning than for willing so that they might dispose themselves to produce fruit with it: "How many souls fail to go to glory but go instead to hell through their neglect. Would that they were as diligent in studying how much God our Lord will demand of them as they are in studying letters, and what will be expected of them for the talent which they have received; then they would be greatly moved, and taking means and making spiritual exercises to know within their soul the will of God, conforming themselves to it rather than to their own inclinations, they would say: "Lord, here I am! What would you that I should do? Send me wherever you will, and, if necessary, even to the Indians!" With how much greater consolation would they then live.

I can tell you nothing more about these parts than that the consolations which God our Lord gives to those who go among these pagans and convert them to the faith of Christ are so great that, if there is ever any joy in this life, this can be said to be it. . . . Oh, if those who study letters used as much effort in helping themselves to relish these consolations, how they would labor by day and night to know them! Oh, if those joys which a student seeks in understanding that which he is studying, he should seek in order to assist his neighbors

to appreciate that which is necessary so that they may know and serve God, with how much greater consolation and preparation would they give an account of themselves when Christ asks of them: "Give an account of your stewardship!" (Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, II, trans. Costelloe, pp. 407 and 409).

This is a call to a joyful journey, set on foot by new tasks. It is the joy which Ignatius said is characteristic of God's visitations to us. Despite the trials of his later years, that joy was at the heart of Ignatius too, as the Society took up one new task after another. It gave to those who encountered it the courage to dare great things and to persevere in them, in the house in Rome, in the city of Rome, in the wide world outside.

The house itself was too small, and sometimes, for Ignatius' taste, too noisy. It swarmed with novices, with people on apostolic journeys, with those who were returning from the missions. It was a veritable caravansary on certain days.

Every day Ignatius saw two of his closest collaborators, his secretary, Juan de Polanco, a clear-minded demon for work, and Luis Gonçalves da Câmara, the Jesuit in charge of the details of the household. The latter was a man capable of drawing out confidences. It is to him that we owe the texts of the *Autobiography* and a *Memorial*, which set down day by day what took place between January 26 and October 23, 1555, in the house of Our Lady of the Way.

What is most striking is the extraordinary simplicity which reigned there. Everybody venerated Ignatius as a quite exceptional person; yet each of them treated him with frankness and simplicity. He wanted people to call him by his baptismal or first name. One day when one of his relatives had come to pay him a visit, the porter at the door called out, "Iñigo, Araoz is here to talk to you." At table he talked about current affairs with those who were sitting with him. He himself ate very little, but he ate very slowly in order to finish at the same time as the others. Food was not always plentiful. Once, when the waiter put on the table as the full meal a few eggs and some toothpicks, one of the other people at table remarked that the latter item seemed to be rather superfluous. Ignatius was mightily amused by the remark.

He had two special concerns in the house, those who were ill and those who were undergoing temptation, especially the temptation of depression.



Every day he kept himself informed of them in talking to Gonçalves. In spite of heavy financial difficulties, he arranged to buy for the community a country house or villa, *La Vigne*, The Vineyard. He provided for it well and he organized the games there.

He bolstered the morale of those who were faltering. To one of the members of the house who thought of himself as an unworthy religious, Ignatius retold, weeping while he did so, the sins of his life. To another one, who had just told him that he simply could not carry on any further, he responded, "Come now, come, everything will be all right"; and he did it in such a manner and with such a look, that this rather ordinary remark put an end to the man's discouragement.

If the formation of the young Jesuits was very demanding, it was also always measured. There was nothing which resembled the far-too-famous "Society mold," or the cookie cutter which stamped out identical little Jesuits. For example, there was a novice who came from a family of the Roman nobility who obviously suffered at being exposed to the public gaze while helping to build a wall along the street-side of the house. "Oh, that's not your work," Ignatius said to him. "Inside the house there are other things for you to do." There is also the story that one day Pedro Ribadeneyra, at that time quite a young novice and a constant favorite of Ignatius, imitated behind his back his limping walk. He was found out and was told to propose the penance of his choice. Pedro suggested a day off for everybody in the house, and a tradition arose there of a day of vacation in honor of the "gimpy leg."

At the same time and perhaps paradoxically, the rule of life was severe, and Ignatius watched over the least failings, especially those which hurt someone else. He was not the only one who could give penances. The cook, for example, had the right to give them, and he did so, such as to those who did not let him know ahead of time that they were going to be absent from meals, even if they were professors of theology or if the pope had kept them at a meeting. A lot of novices were sent home, but, Gonçalves remarked, they departed with friendly feelings toward Ignatius and toward the Society, even if they had been judged unsuitable for this particular life.

Friendship seems very much to have been the characteristic note of the community. It shone forth from Ignatius, who wanted "companions" rather

than "sons." He received friendship in return, in all kinds of small and thoughtful kindnesses, especially when he was sick. People brought him roasted chestnuts of the kind he was familiar with at Azpeitia, for example, or André des Freux was asked to play the harpsichord for him. And the music helped to bring him back to health. A man who gave heart to others, he was also capable of receiving their comfort and encouragement.

As for the city, the house was open to the whole place. That city was, on the one hand, the papal court and, on the other, the poor people, two very different worlds.

Right from their arrival, the companions turned toward the poor. It was not only in order to preach the good news to them. During the winter of 1538-1539, the companions turned their house into a refuge for the poor, in order to take care of an immense number of people exhausted by hunger and cold. They worked with the Jews, the prostitutes, the young women faced with prostitution. They knew how to mobilize their energies in favor of the most disinherited.

The other world was the papal court. To it also the house was open. At Rome Ignatius knew four popes. Paul III, who gave final approval for the foundation of the Society, and Julius III, who confirmed the Society, were generally attached to reform in the church. But they lacked the courage to undertake what was essential. "If the pope reformed himself," said Ignatius, "that is, himself personally and his household and the cardinals in Rome, there would be nothing more to do. Everything else would take care of itself quickly and by itself." The man of whom he had great hopes, the saintly Marcellus II (the uncle of the future Jesuit Robert Bellarmine), died three weeks after his election as pope. His successor could have been very dangerous for the Society. As a cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa had tried to oppose the foundation of the Society. On May 23, 1555, he was elected pope under the name of Paul IV, and he continued to have his doubts about the Society. In addition, he was a strong-willed and implacable man who brooked opposition with exceedingly small grace. Luis Gonçalves da Câmara reports that, at the news of Carafa's election,

Ignatius experienced vivid emotions. His face changed and, as I knew a little later, his bones shook. He got up without saying



a word and went into the chapel to pray. A little later he came out of the chapel as joyous and content as if the election had been in accord with his desires (Da Câmara, *Memoriale*, number 93, in *FN*, I, 581-582).

But then Ignatius himself had once said that it would only take a quarter of an hour of prayer for him to recover from the suppression of the Society. His courage under trial had its source in God as everything else did.

In the enterprises which he proposes, he seems very often not to use any human prudence. . . . It seems rather that he does everything relying solely on his confidence in God. But just as he seems to go beyond human prudence when he is creating new enterprises, so when he is actually carrying them out and looking for the means to make them flourish, he uses all prudence, both divine and human. Whatever it is that he undertakes, it seems that first of all he deals with God about it. And since the rest of us do not see what he has discussed with God, we are stupified to see how he takes things on (Da Câmara, *Memoriale*, no. 234, in *FN*, I, 663-664).

This way of acting finds echoes in the aphorism attributed to him:

Let this be the first rule of your undertaking: Confide in God as if the success of those undertakings depended completely upon you and not at all upon God; nonetheless give your whole self to the undertakings as if you yourself would be doing nothing in them but God alone would be doing everything.

This sentence has seemed so paradoxical that people have thought it better to turn the proposition around. One will often see it put briefly: "Pray as if everything depended upon God; act as if everything depended upon you." That is not the sense of the statement as it was first attributed to Ignatius. Rather it would have been: "Pray as if everything depended upon you; act as if everything depended upon God." \*

This activity meant even politics, both ecclesiastical and secular, on the condition that the enterprise be first of all "spoken of with God."

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\* See in G. Fessard, *La dialectique des Exercices Spirituels de Saint Ignace de Loyola* (Paris, 1956) p. 305 ff., the fifty-eight page commentary on what happened to the aphorism through the ages. It ranges from people as far back as Gerson in the fourteenth century to Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul in the nineteenth. However, Fessard's viewpoint too on this topic is controverted. See the review by Hugo M. de Achaval, S.J., in *Gregorianum*, XXXVIII (1957), 324-327. See, too, Ribadeneyra's phrasing, in De Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, p. 148, footnote 55.

People have spoken so much and with such unholy relish of the "power of the Jesuits" that biographers of Ignatius are sometimes extremely discreet on the political activity of the founder of the Society. As if that particular human means were of itself unworthy of him and of his apostolic plans, or as if what a lot of people instinctively think about politics, that it is a dirty business, has to be true. Despite the obvious instances of politics in the Church too, many Christians think that way also. Good or bad they may be, but if there are three people together, in at least some way politics will be present. Ignatius was not beyond using other people's political influence to help what he saw as the greater good. To mention only one example, the pope wanted to make certain Jesuits bishops. In the particular case of Claude Jay, Ignatius in 1546 paid a quiet night visit to Cardinal Salviati's residence (in what is today the Hotel Columbus, almost directly across the street from the present Curia) to get his help in influencing the pope not to choose Jay.

Some regret or find it reprehensible that one does not find in the work of Ignatius the echo of a fight against the forms of oppression of his times. It is true that he was not able to pose for himself the problems which would not emerge in the consciousness of humanity until quite a bit later. But one might note that, when he speaks in the *Exercises* of ecclesiastical benefices, it is not a haphazard example. He was very well aware, because he had seen it lived in his own family, that the owners of such benefices formed a privileged class, oppressors of the poor.

It does remain a fact that Ignatius was particularly interested in what one would call the "major political questions" and that this interest, however strange it seems, was not unlinked with his global plan. Why did he propose to Charles V to prepare an armed fleet in the Mediterranean? Why did he write a letter to Peter Canisius, the missionary Jesuit, on the ways to settle the "German question," and not only with reference to religion?

At least it should not surprise us that his attention was directed to two centrally important areas, geographically and historically. In the Mediterranean the war against Islam in one sense still belonged to the medieval era, but in another its results would condition Spain's early modern greatness. In Germany the Reformation and the breakup of Christianity



was a phenomenon of modern times, often carried on or opposed, at least in part, out of medieval presuppositions.

In 1552 Charles V had exhausted himself in his defensive wars against Suleiman. In his naval proposal Ignatius suggested that he regain the initiative in the Mediterranean. It was not for the glory of combat, but in order to save the Christians who had been forced into slavery and often enough forced to deny their faith, and to reestablish communications through the Mediterranean between Spain and Italy, between Europe and Africa and the Near East. Did Ignatius recall the vow made by the companions at Montmartre to go to Jerusalem?

In Germany the country was divided by the religious question. The various *colloquia* had brought about no results at all. The king, Ferdinand, the brother of Charles V, was discouraged. The letter of Ignatius, which was a series of action proposals, was not a program of counter-reformation but it was a way of saying that those who were responsible should stop being afraid, stop hesitating, and choose among all the possible initiatives the ones that seemed the best. But then, the decision taken, do something. Then they would get back their confidence and their calm in the actions they set on foot.

To face up to a situation, to regain the initiative, to choose among the means available, and to persevere courageously are, it is easy to see, the kinds of advice given in the *Exercises*. One should not be astonished to see them also applied in these matters by a man who had so unified his life that he was able to say in his last days that "whenever he wished, at whatever hour, he could find God" (*Autobiog*, 99).

He certainly found God in the correspondence which he carried on. Every day dozens of letters left Santa Maria della Strada for the cities of Europe, for the Indies, for Japan, addressed to members of the Society or to other persons responsible in various ways for the destinies of men and women. More than six thousand of those letters have been collected but how many of them have been lost no one knows. He remarked in 1542 that he had to write to everybody, and that at that time he calculated that the letters actually sent in all directions were up to two hundred and fifty. The pace increased enormously in the following years. By 1552 there were seven hundred letters for that year alone.

The number of such letters did not impair their quality. Each was written twice. He once asked Pierre Favre to try to do the same. Put yourself in my place, he said in substance. Your letters contain exact information but presented in no particular order and interrupted by spontaneous remarks and by confidential material which I cannot put in the hands of everyone. Please write two letters, one with the factual material, the other with the confidential material.

Here again, with reference to such extensive correspondence, there is a unity between the daily experience of Ignatius and the spirit of the Exercises. "It will be good to call attention to two points: The first is that love ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in words. The second is that love consists in a mutual sharing of goods" (*Exercises*, [230-231]). If Ignatius insisted so much on letter writing and correspondence in the Society, it was because such communication was the expression of the communion that existed there. The letters which he sent were often copied and recopied and sent on farther. The letters which he received had to be available to others, because the communion of the members among themselves was for the sake of a communion which was even larger than that, the communion of all men and women in the body of Christ. It was part of the work of the Society to help toward the growth of that body. That is why just as "deeds are worth more than words," so factual information was worth more than simple effusiveness for the purpose of better discernment of what ventures ought to be undertaken.

During all these years from 1540 on, so much had been happening in a world in which the Society was everywhere growing. For instance, coming onto the stage or playing out their roles or making a final exit were men and women (listed here without attention to precise chronology) as diverse as Michelangelo and Angela Merici and Henry VIII and Marguerite of Navarre and Raphael and El Greco and Luther and Calvin and Copernicus and Mary Tudor and Cervantes and Ivan the Terrible and Titian and Suleiman the Magnificent and Palestrina. The Turks were a menace ever looming over Christendom. England returned briefly to the faith of Rome. The Roman Inquisition had begun. The earth shrank into the vastness of a newly proposed heliocentric universe.



At the center of the network of Jesuits all over the world, Ignatius was principally the man of discernment and decision, devoted and attentive to the spirit of God and to the expectations and the hopes of men. Tracing in the *Constitutions* the portrait of the general, he said the following of him:

He ought to be endowed with great understanding and judgment, in order that this talent may not fail him either in the speculative or the practical matters which may arise. And although learning is highly necessary for one who will have so many learned men in his charge, still more necessary is prudence along with experience in spiritual and interior matters, that he may be able to discern the various spirits and to give counsel and remedies to so many who will have spiritual necessities.

He also needs discretion in exterior matters and a manner of handling such diverse affairs as well as of conversing with such various persons from within and without the Society" (*Constitutions*, [729]).

He was not thinking of doing a self-portrait, but it was just that.

It was in order to live out such responsibilities right to the end that the last letters left the general's office as usual on the evening of July 30, 1556.

## EPILOGUE

### A NEW WORLD AS THE STAGE

July 31, 1556: Full Circle

#### *An Event from the Life of Ignatius*

*In January Ignatius was already very ill with severe stomach pains. For months he had not been able to celebrate Mass; he received Communion once a week. In February he was slightly better. In June, more pain and now fever. He could no longer take care of the government of the Society and had given over its daily care to others.*

*At the beginning of July Ignatius had gone to get some rest at the Vineyard, the villa which he had bought for the community. He was extremely tired and had unbearable pain. . . . Four of the early companions had already gone to the Lord: Diego Hoces, "the first to die in the Society"; Jean Codure, who had died very soon after their professions made at St. Paul Outside-the-Walls; Pierre Favre, who had died on upon returning from one of his many journeys; and Francis Xavier, who had died at the gates of China.*

*On July 25 Laynez, too, was ill enough to receive the anointing of the sick.*

*Just this present week Ignatius had returned to the house in Rome at Santa Maria della Strada and had asked to be put into the hands of the doctor who regularly took care of the other ill members of the house.*

*Yesterday, Thursday, he had dealt with current matters as he had every other day. After the noonday meal he had asked Juan de Polanco, the secretary of the Society, to go to the pope to ask him for the blessing for the dying. But the doctors were not too concerned, and Polanco had remarked that there were still some important letters to take care of, so that they could get into the mail right away. The mail . . . the companions "spread all over the world". . . .*

*Ignatius had told him that it was all right then, that Polanco should do as he thought best. That evening he had supper with some of those closest to him, and he did not seem in immediate danger.*

*He was now by himself.*

*About midnight, the brother who lived in the room next door heard him say "My God!" Then silence.*

*At dawn on July 31 the brother went into Ignatius' room. He was already*



*in the throes of death. Polanco rushed off to the papal residence. Everybody who could hurried into Ignatius' room. By the time Polanco returned with the pope's blessing, about 5:30 in the morning, Ignatius had died.*

*The thousand companions spread all over the world heard little by little the news sent by Polanco. Ignatius had left them "without summoning us in order to give us his blessing, without having put the last touches to the Constitutions, without any of those solemn gestures which the servants of God customarily make. . . . He died in the most ordinary way in the world."*

#### *A Related Text from the Exercises*

I will ponder with great affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and finally, how much, as far as He can, the same Lord desires to give Himself to me according to His divine decrees.

Consider all blessings and gifts as descending from above. Thus, my limited power comes from the supreme and infinite power above, and so, too, justice, goodness, mercy, etc., descend from above as the rays of light descend from the sun, and as the waters flow from their fountains.

Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is moved by great feeling, I will make this offering of myself: Take, Lord, and receive (Contemplation to Attain the Love of God, *Exercises*, [234, 237]).

#### *Contextual Circumstances, Then and Now*

There is no way of knowing whether Ignatius was ever explicitly told that he was living at the beginning of a new world, but it is rather unlikely. We, on the other hand, have all too frequently been informed that we are in the midst of a world so novel that "future shock" is predicted for most of us. But whatever the case, just as Charlie Brown of *Peanuts* cartoon fame acknowledged when seeking psychiatric help, "This is the only world we have," so Lucy the "psychiatrist" yelled in return in no uncertain terms, "Well, live in it!" Our new world is the only one we have and we have to live in it as the stage on which we play out our personal experiences, interpret those experiences in the light of the gift of the Spiritual Exercises, and

in turn understand and experience the Exercises out of what happens in our lives in this world.

Much that was said of Ignatius in the Prologue to this study, "A New World as the Stage," can be said of us in this Epilogue, also entitled "A New World as the Stage." It was not earthshaking news when we were born into our families, most of us in the twentieth century, but upheavals in this our modern world have surely taken place in our lifetimes, and it is our great good luck to be born in these times--except that for us, too, it is not luck but rather part of the work of a God who "conducts Himself as one who labors" in all our circumstances.

The particulars of our lives are simple enough, too. We have our share of specific characteristics, as Ignatius did. If our faith is real, our virtue is, for each in his own way, deficient. We may be on the threshold of a new "inculturation" as was the early Society. The Church officially called for reform in the sixteenth century; in the twentieth century it officially calls for renewal, for updating (*aggiornamento*). The Society is even more than in Ignatius' time "everywhere in the world." It too, today as then, has "to read the signs of the times and to respond to the most urgent and universal needs."

Most of all, we have our own personal lives as individuals and also our communitarian lives as companions in the Lord in the Society of Jesus. The multiple experiences of those lives wait, as they did for Ignatius, to be animated by the "fundamental experience from which the mission and life of a Jesuit spring," the Spiritual Exercises.

Near the beginning of this study, it was remarked that "the life of Ignatius and the Exercises come together in a unity." For us in 1978, as for Ignatius from 1491 to 1556, how that will happen is up to us and, preeminently, up to a God who knows and loves each of us individually as He continues to "Look down upon the whole expanse or circuit of all the earth, filled with human beings...so many different..." (*Exercises*, [102-103]).



## A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following books, a very limited selection to be sure, and only of works presently in English, can introduce a reader to a much fuller treatment of Ignatius, and of the experience of his life. They are most useful, too, in illuminating the relationship between those experiences and the *Spiritual Exercises*.

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